DNYANESHWARI

(THE PHILOSOPHICAL PART)

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The COMMON MAN'S GITA

Dnyaneshwari is a commentary on the Gita written more than seven centuries ago by Saint Dnyaneshwar in the contemporary Marathi language in verse form using the ovi style. It brought the philosophy of the Gita, until then the prerogative of Sanskrit pundits, to common man. It is written in verse form as used to be custom of those days, An excellent spiritual seekers guide, it discusses in detail four different paths viz. The path of Knowledge, the path of action, the path of yoga and the path of devotion to choose from depending upon the psychological make up of the seeker. It presents the cream of Vedanta philosophy, Sankhya philosophy, Kundalini yoga and the practice of devotion. While Gita is difficult to understand to a common man, Saint Dnyaneshwar has written Dnyaneshwari (Original name Bhavarthadeepika) specifically for common man and therefore the text is easy to understand.

Saint Dnyaneshwar wrote this critique at the age of sixteen on the instructions of his Guru and elder (only by two years) brother Nivruttinath. Nivruttinath was a disciple of Gahininath, one of the nine gems or Navnaths of the Nath sect. Dnyaneshwari written seven hundred years ago is still vibrantly alive and is regularly read in many homes in Maharashtra.

Due to changes in the Marathi language over the last few centuries the text is not easily understandable, but many prose translations are available. While writing commentary on Gita Dnyaneshwar Maharaj has used a lot of examples and similes from day to day life and from nature to make the meaning very clear to a common reader. However, with today's educational levels many of these are not necessary and often they

distract the reader from the smooth flow of the philosophical thought. In this translation therefore
(i) Only the philosophical part of the text has been retained except where there is need for clarifying the meaning
(ii) Rather that presenting the translation sequentially it is presented as a group of sequential verses (omitting of course those having similes etc.) with a cogent meaning and are subtitled.
Omitting unnecessary similes (for modern reader) and further omitting the traditional obeisances made to various deities and his Guru, only 5752 *ovis* (verses) have been used out of the total 9032 ovis, reducing the material by about a third.

This translation, thus truncated, is intended more for an intellectual reader rather than the pious. It is the intellectuals who hold executive and professional positions in today's socio-economic world and are the ones who can influence the society positively or negatively. But their world is a world of perpetual haste and cannot afford long winded texts of the old days. Thus a shortened version of Dnyaneshwari is most suited for this class un order to turn their influence on the positive side. (See PROLOGUE)

Being a commentary on the Gita, Dnyaneshwari also has 18 chapters.

CHAPTER 1 : ARJUNA'S DESPONENCY

CHAPTER 2 : THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 3 : PATH OF ACTIONS

CHAPTER 4 : YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 5 : RENUNCIATION

CHAPTER 6 : MEDITATION

CHAPTER 7 : WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 8 : THE IMPERISHABLE ABSOLUTE

CHAPTER 9 : SOVEREIGN KNOWLEDGE AND SOVEREIGN MYSTERY

CHAPTER 10 : DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

CHAPTER 11 : VISION OF UNIVERSAL FORM

CHAPTER 12 : YOGA OF DEVOTION

CHAPTER 13 : THE FIELD AND THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD

CHAPTER 14 : THE THREE ATTRIBUTES

CHAPTER 15 : THE SUPREME PERSON

CHAPTER 16 : DIVINE AND DEMONIACAL ENDOWMENTS

CHAPTER 17 : THREE KINDS OF FAITH

CHAPTER 18 : RELEASE THROUGH RENUNCIATION

The philosophical part really starts in chapter 2. In this text however, Chapter 1 has been included giving a brief background of the situation on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Also presented are: A backdrop of Mahabharata War and brief biographies of Saint Dnyaneshwar and of my Guru Shri Shankar Maharaj who loved Dnyaneshwari fondly calling it Dnyani. It was on his instructions
that I began to read Dnyaneshwari and this work could not have been possible without his grace.

Offered at the feet of my Guru Shri Shankar Maharaj. Alakh Niranjan.

V. V. Shirvaikar

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
OF
SAINT DNYANESHWAR

Saint Dnyaneshwar was the second of the four children of Vithalpant and Rukminibai Kulkarni, a pious couple from the village Apegaon near Paithan (old *Pratishthan*) in Maharashtra on the banks of River Godavari.

Vithalpant studied Vedas and Shastras and became well versed in them at a very young age. Being extremely pious and detached towards worldly matters he spent much of his time on pilgrimage. During one of the pilgrimages he visited Alandi about 30 Km from Pune and camped in the local Hanuman temple. Sidhopant, a local brahmin, was very much impressed with the youth and thought him as a suitable match for his daughter Rukmini. He met Vithalpant and after making enquiries proposed the marriage. Not having any interest in setting up a family, Vithalpant declined but because of instructions received in a vision he later consented.

After marriage Vithalpant remained at Alandi for some time but due to his lack of interest in family life his father-in-law took him to Apegaon where Vithalpant's father Govindpant and mother were happy to see their married son. Unfortunately both passed away shortly thereafter leaving the family responsibilities to Vithalpant who could not make the two ends meet due to his disinterest in worldly matters. Finally Sidhopant took the couple back to Alandi under his shelter. But

that did not make any difference to Vithalpant who one fine day went for bath on the river and instead of returning home, went to Varanasi.

Vithalpant takes sanyas In Varanasi Vithalpant met a great saint Ramanandswami. Suppressing the fact that he was a married person he requested Ramanandswami to be accepted as a disciple and to be initiated as a sanyasi. Now, according to the rules, a married person cannot become a sanyasi unless he is permitted by his wife. The ritual of adopting the *sanyas* requires undergoing the rituals performed for a dead person. All his past is supposed to be erased and he is given a new name. Vithalpant was renamed as Chaitanyashram.

One day Ramanandswami set upon a pilgrimage to Rameshwar and on the way halted at Alandi. While he was camping there Rukminibai who now spent her time in worship and other spiritual pre-occupations to drown her grief, went to meet Ramanndswami who uttered the words of blessing to her *Putravati Bhava* or "May you have children". Rukminibai started laughing at these words and when asked to explain told the Swamiji the situation that her husband had deserted her. Swamiji probed her and realised that the description of her husband fitted his disciple Chaitanyashram. According to the *shastras* he was also to blame for having initiated Vithalpant. He immediately abandoned the pilgrimage and returned to Varanasi and accosted Chaitanyashram who confessed to his guilt. He ordered Chaitanyashram immediately to return to his wife and establish a family.

Return of Vithalpant to family life Vithalpant returned to Alandi but was excommunicated from the community because it was unheard of and against

shastras to abandon *sanyas* and adopt family life again. Vithalpant managed to spend his time in the study of Vedas and Shastras. In the course of time four children were borne to the couple: Nivrutti in the year 1273, Dnyandeo (Dnyaneshwar) in 1275, Sopan in 1277 and the fourth a daughter Muktabai in 1279. Everything was fine until Nivrutti was seven years old which is the time when a boy of brahmin parentage has to undergo thread ceremony and be inducted as a brahmin. He approached the brahmins of Alandi to be permitted to perform the thread ceremony but the conservative orthodox community refused.

Nivrutti joins nath sect In a state of extreme distress Vithalpant went to Triambakeshwar (near Nasik) with his family for performing worship at the Shiva temple. Triambakeshwar is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas or luminary lingas of Lord Shiva. While they had gone for performing *pradakshina* (circumambulation) of the temple one night they encountered a ferocious tiger (in thirteenth century the area was a deep forest) The members of the family ran helter skelter and were dispersed. Nivrutti wandered into a cave in the Anjani mountain where Gahininath, one of the nine Naths was staying for some time. He was attracted towards Nivrutti and in spite of his young age initiated him into Nath sect assigning him the mantra "Ramakrishna Hari" instructing him to propagate devotion to Shri Krishna. That is how Nivrutti became Nivruttinath. The matter of excommunication did not affect this because the Nath sect does not bother about caste system and though socially it may be observed it is ignored in spiritual matters.

Vithalpant and Rukminibai commit suicide All the four children were very intelligent and pious. They studied the Vedas and Shastras under their father but because they were excommunicated they could not join the brahmin community or study in schools run by them. In desperation Vithalpant went to Apegaon and appealed to the brahmins there who after studying the *shastras* opined that death was the only atonement for the sin. In a hopeless state of mind Vithalpant and Rukminibai abandoned their children at Apegaon, travelled to Prayag and drowned themselves in the River Ganges.

The orphan children somehow grew up begging for dry alms from sympathetic people which they would cook and eat. In the course of time they too approached the brahmin community of Paithan to accept them as brahmins after whatever purification rites necessary but the brahmin community refused. However, considering the excellent behaviour of the children and their learning they permitted them to live in the community on the condition that they will observe celibacy and produce no progeny. This was in 1287 when Dnyandeo was twelve years old.

Birth of Dnyaneshwari About this time Nivrutinath initiated Dnyanadeo into the Nath sect and instructed him to write a commentary on Gita. Thus we have a unique situation of a fourteen year old Guru instructing his twelve year old disciple to write something which has become the hope of humanity. The children moved to Nevase, a village in Nagar district on the banks of Pravara river. There Dnyandeo began his commentary on Gita. He used to give a discourse on it to a group of seekers, some of them belonging to the Nath sect but many were followers of the path of devotion. A local

devotee by name Sacchinanandbaba wrote down whatever Dnyandeo said. A prominent person among the audience was the saint Namdeo known for the miracle where Vithoba the presiding deity of Pandharpur had eaten the food offering brought by Namdeo when he was a mere boy. Dnyandeo and Namdeo had met earlier at Pandharpur and developed mutual friendship.

There is a legend regarding Sacchitanandababa mentioned above. On the day Nivrutiinath, Dnyandeo etc. entered Nevase, Sacchitanandababa had died and was being carried to the cremation ground accompanied by his wife Soudamini who wanted to commit Sati. Somebody suggested that a saint had come and she should get his blessings before going as Sati. She found Dnyandeo sitting in meditation under a tree. She bowed to him when he blessed her with the words "*Akhand Saubhagyavati Bhava*" meaning may you never be a widow. When he came out of meditation he realised the odd situation but praying to God and Guru and using his powers he brought back Sacchitanandababa to life. The latter remained his devotee for life.

Dnyandeo started on his commentary which he called Bhavarthadeepika in the year 1287 when he was merely twelve year old. He finished it two and half years later in 1290. By that time he had developed a great friendship with Namdeo. He had also realised that the path of yoga on which the Nath sect gives a great stress could not be easily followed by everyone and the path of devotion was a key for all seekers irrespective of his or her caste, creed or gender. Perhaps he was influenced in this by Namdeo who was a tailor by profession and therefore traditionally belonged to Shudra caste.

Dnyandeo joins Varkari group Shortly after the completion of Bhavarthadeepika, Dnyandeo joined the *varkari* movement probably under the influence of Namdeo and virtually became their leader. The *varkari* sect is known by that name because it is considered essential to visit Pandharpur at least twice a year, on the two Ekadashi (11^{th} day by lunar calendar) in Ashadh (which falls sometime in August) and Kartik (which falls sometime in November) months. It is a path of devotion to Vithoba, the presiding deity of Pandharpur who is same as Shri Krishna. Peculiarity of this deity at Pandharpur is that it wears a crown with Shivalinga on it, thus linking the Shaivaites and Vaishnavaites. This deity used to be in Karnataka and was later brought to Pandharpur. For the sake of the devotees Dnyandeo wrote Amritanubhava, again in verse form dealing with spiritual and devotional topics. Both Dnyaneshwari and Amritanubhava are holy texts for the Varkari sect today.

Pilgrimage and samadhi Dnyandeo then accompanied Namdeo and several other followers of devotee path like Savata Mali, began a pilgrimage of all the holy places of north, east and west India. Immediately after returning to Alandi Dnyandeo (in 1296) expressed his desire to leave his body by taking samadhi. He chose the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of Kartik for the final samadhi. People gathered and had final round of *bhajans* etc. Dnyandeo embraced his brothers and sister and close friends like Namdeo. With tears in the eyes of all he entered the cave and sat in the yogic posture, The cave was sealed by a stone and Dnyandeo left his body by yogic process. Dnyandeo was only 21 years of age at this time.

Death of brothers and sister Within a year and a half of this event his brothers and sister also left the material world. Sopandeo took samadhi at Saswad near Pune. Nivruttinath travelled with his sister on a pilgrimage along Tapi river where both were caught one day in a thunderstorm. In the roar of thunder, rain and lightning Muktabai vanished without trace. Soon after, Nivruttinath took samadhi at Triambakeshwar. Thus was the end of an unusual family who enlightened the world spiritually and continue to do so even today. All the children were highly spiritually evolved persons. Muktabai, even as she was in her teens became Guru to a highly accomplished yogi named Changdeo who was believed to be several centuries old.

Epilogue Soon after this the Muslim invasions India started in India and affected the religious and spiritual life of India, ending a spiritually golden era. It became progressively difficult to venture upon *vari* and pilgrimages. But copies of Dnyaneshwari were preserved by many families and were read regularly. In the course of copying and probably due to the additions of their own works, many copies got corrupted. Three hundred years later in 1584 Saint Eknath collected several available copies and after careful studies prepared a good copy as free of corrupt text as possible. Even today different copies available show slight differences in their contents as regards some words (and hence the meaning) and also the number of *ovis*. But that is not a very serious matter except to a historian.

PROLOGUE

This translation of Dnyaneshwari contains only the philosophical part of the text. When Dnyaneshwar Maharaj wrote **Bhavarthadeepika**, now known as Dnyaneshwari, seven hundred years ago for the common man, general educational levels were not as comprehensive as today, there was no printing press and books had to be transcribed by hand. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj used many similes and examples from human society as well as nature to explain the points made in the Gita. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj belonged to Nath Sect where Guru is worshipped more than any deity and Dnyaneshwari contains a lot of text dedicated to the praise of and obeisances to his Guru Nivruttinath (who was also his elder brother, elder by only two years), besides obeisances to several other deities as is traditional in Hindu religious literature. These similes and examples are no longer necessary for today's rader who is better read and informed and in fact it is the experience that too many of these distract the reader from the main flow of thought. In this translation, these parts are omitted except where necessary. The text involving obeisances also has been omitted as it is also extraneous to the philosophical part. The intention in adopting this approach is to make an edited translation available to an intellectual reader. The pious readers

can always use the half a dozen verse by verse translations avaolable in bookshops.
Due to differences in the structure of Marathi and English, verse by verse translations pose difficulty in colating the verses to make a single long sentence. In this translations, a set of consecutive verses have been grouped together to make sentences and paragraphs with cogent meaning and the paragraphs are given sub-headings for easy reference and meaning. Thus this translation can claim to assist a rader in faster reading. By this approach the text was shortened to 5752 verses out of the total of 9032 verse (ovis).

INTELLECTUAL APPEAL

This translation, thus truncated, is intended more for an intellectual reader rather than the pious. It is the intellectuals who hold executive and professional positions in today's socio-economic world and are the ones who can influence the society positively or negatively. But their world is a world of perpetual haste and cannot afford long winded texts of the old days. Thus a shortened version of Dnyaneshwari is most suited for this class un order to turn their influence on the positive side.
There is a subconscious respect for God in the hearts and minds of everybody and a professional or an executive is no exception. It only needs to find a way out. Intelligence and spirituality seem to be well associated mutually. Greatest spiritual persons were people of high intelligence who were curious enough to ask themselves the question "Who am I?" and in

looking for the answer, took to spiritual path; or they were persons who had a natural attraction towards the spiritual path. While some renounced the world and became sanyasis, contrary to the belief many have even today, one need not forsake his family life in order to take up a spiritual path. The reader will find it stated in the Dnyaneshwari that it is not necessary to give up your normal life in order to search for God. You have a choice of paths which ultimately end, according to the Indian philosophy and the experience of the spiritual masters, into Self-realisation i.e. a realisation that you are no different from the Almighty. That is why every intelligent person should read Dnyaneshwari.

There are many reasons why intelligent persons should turn to the spiritual path. Intelligence like other qualities is a gift of God. It is not a personal achievement and therefore, instead of being proud about one's intelligence the correct attitude should be that of gratitude towards the Almighty for possessing it. Having this gift of God, one may expect an intelligent executive or professional to utilise that gift to experience Self-realisation. Many persons seem to realise this and become spiritual seekers. A large number of people joining the various spiritual institutions like the Ramakrishna Ashram, the order of Samarth Ramdas at Sajjangad in Maharashtra and many others are persons of high academic achievement. For many intellectuals however there are many initial problems and mental hurdles to be overcome before he becomes a seeker.

The first hurdle is the misconception that one has to renounce the world and be a Sanyasi for taking up the spiritual path. The Gita (and naturally Dnyaneshwari) teaches us otherwise and considers Sanyas as unnecessary.

The second hurdle is the fear that spiritual exercises would divert the mind from the duties of the office and impede success. This is also not correct. Spiritual exercises instill a discipline into one's person, remove fear and make one more efficient. In fact, many yoga and meditation techniques have been adapted for pacifying the mind and instilling a positive approach to life. Many executives pay high fees to attend such courses and workshops where these techniques are taught and find then beneficial. Even big commercial companies send their executives to such courses. The philosophy of the Gita goes much beyond that.
The Third hurdle is the mental impediment about the availability of time. This again is baseless, for one can always find a few minutes in a day, even while travelling to work, to ponder over spiritual matters or read about it.

The Fourth hurdle is the problem of how to go about it. Who would guide and tell whether the path taken is correct or not? and so on. The Gita answers many of these questions and suggests many paths which one may choose from depending upon one's personality.

Executives and professionals, by virtue of the nature of their work are constrained to practice a materialistic approach to life. They are therefore subject to all the stresses derived therefrom. The stresses and the resultant problems of health can be avoided and one can have a happy life if one understands and follows the basic philosophy of the Gita/Dnyaneshwari. The changes in attitude give happiness and lay a foundation for the current life as well as life after retirement. The changes are transmitted to one's family who also become happy. A few can pursue the spiritual path

while leading a normal life and attain experience of God.

Thus this translation which concentrates on the philosophy of Gita as interpreted by Saint Dnyaneshwar is eminently suitable for the intellectual class.

THE GITA - SOME HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Gita is considered as a part of the Epic *Mahabharata*. Traditional belief is that the Gita comprises of the advice given by Lord Krishna to a disheartened Arjuna when the armies of Pandavas and Kauravas were standing face to face on the Kurukshetra battlefield. On the first day, Arjuna saw all his elders whom he revered as well as his cousins and friends against whom he would be fighting and was unnerved by the thought that so many people would be killed during the war. He therefore refused to fight. This was a shock to Shri Krishna who was his charioteer. Shri Krishna then gave a profound advice to Arjuna which is now known as the Gita. The pious strongly believe that the dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna really did occur. They also believe that even during his lifetime, Shri Krishna was known as an avatar of Lord Vishnu.

However, an intellectual is bound to get several doubts in his mind regarding the veracity of this legend and therefore applicability of the philosophy discussed in the Gita. Common sense would tell that the advice in the Gita in the present form could not have been was given on the battlefield as stated. Even in verse form it takes about two hours for recitation of the 700 shlokas (verses) of the Gita. In prose it would take much longer. Can the armies wait on the battleground for such a long time? Besides, when one reads the Gita, it is quite clear that Arjuna would have understood his folly after what was said in the early part of the second chapter. There

would not be any need to go into the details of Sankhya and Vedanta philosophy and philosophy of the paths of action and of devotion, topics which have no relevance under the circumstances. The Gita therefore must have been a peacetime composition.

Historical reaearch does trace the philosophy of Gita to Shri Krishna, however it also casts doubts on many of the traditional beliefs as will be seen in the following.

The text of Mahabharata has had many additions made to it over the two millenia it has been in existence. A critical edition of Mahabharata has been prepared by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune and is considered as reliable version of the epic. Today it contains about 100,000 verses. Its study has revealed that over the ages five persons have contributed to the text. This may be confirmed from the research made by Mr M. R. Yardi presented in his book titled "*Mahabharata, Its Genesis and Growth, a Statistical Study*" published by the Bhandarkar Institure.. Mr Yardi, a. eminent administartor and scholar now in Pune, is the author of similar analytical books on Ramayana and the Gita. He is also well known for his translations of Dnyaneshwari in Marathi prose, Hindi and English, (published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan). The essence of his study is as follows: (I am grateful to Mr Yardi for making his analytical publications available to me.)
The original version named ***Jaya*** composed immediately after the great Mahabharata war (which took place a little earlier than 1000 BC according to western scholars and much earlier according to some Indian scholars) was written by the great Rishi Vyas. It mainly described the family feud and the war. This

composition is now lost. But a generation later, in around 950 BC, Rishi Vaishampayana retold the events to King Janamejaya, great-grandson of Arjuna during the Snake sacrifice (Sarpayajna) performed in order to avenge the killing of his father Parikshita by Takshaka the King of snakes. This narration was known as ***Bharat*.** Additions to this version were made much later in about 450 BC by Suta and his son Sauti who were well-known Puraniks (Mythological story-tellers) This was known as ***Mahabharata***. Further additions were made by one Harivanshakara in the second century BC and still later by Parvasangrahakara in the first century BC. Haivanshkara also added Haivansha, a biography of Shri Krishna which is considered to be part of Mahabharata today.

Through a statistical analyses of the Anushtup metre used in the ***Shlokas*** (stanzas) of the epic Mahabharata, Mr Yardi has been able to separate the contribution of each of the additions as follows: Original ***Jaya*** by Vyas had 8,800 *shlokas*; *Bharat* by Rishi Vaishampayana had 21,,162 *shlokas;* Suta contributed 17,284 *shlokas* and his son Sauti 26,728 *shlokas;* Harivanshakara added 9,053 *shlokas* and Parvasangrahakara 1369 *shlokas*. This makes a total of 75596 Shlokas and together with Harivansha which has 6,073 Shlokas the total size of the Mahabharata Epic is 81,670 Shlokas. Different copies of Mahabharata give different numbers of Shlokas. Yardi has used the Critical Edition by Sukhatankar (1944) available with the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Pune.

The analysis also shows that the Gita was added to Mahabharata by Sauti who lived around 450 BC. Shri Krishna was deified and considered as an avatar of

Lord Vishnu some centuries after he died but before Sauti's time thus enabling him to present Shri Krishna as the Supreme God.

In his scholarly book "The Bhagvadgita as a Synthesis", Yardi gives the following interesting information related to Shri Krishna and the source of the philosophies presented by Sauti through his lips in the role of the Supreme God:

There is sufficient evidence in Mahabharata to show that in his time Shri Krishna was considered as a human being and not an avatar. The deity worshipped in those times was Lord Shiva whom Shri Krishna also worshipped. He had propitiated Lord Shiva to obtain a boon of a son from Rukmini and again from another wife Jambavati. After he received the boon Uma, wife of Lord Shiva was delighted by his devotion to Lord Shiva and she too granted him boons addressing him as ***amaraprabhava*** i.e. one possessed of prowess equal to that of an immortal. Also, during a dialogue with Bhishma regarding the glory of Lord Shiva, Shri Krishna refers to himself as a mere human being and therefore not in a position to know that great God who was the final goal of all good men. However Shri Krishna was credited with high degree of spiritual power and was recognised by the Vrishni clan (to which Shri Krishna belonged) as a human god. In the days of Sauti he came to be recognised as a partial avatar of Vishnu. Though he is referred to as a cowherd in Suta-Sauti's version of the Epic, the stories of his being a child-god in Gokul and his playing with *Gopis* occur only in the additions by Harivanshakara. The legends which connect him with Radha, his favourite *gopi,* occurs for the first time in 900 AD. Radha is not

at all mentioned either in Mahabharata, not even in the Harivanshakara's additions to it though the latter primarily deals with the biography of Shri Krishna.

Some scholars belonging to the Varshni clan, though they themselves followed the ***Panchratra*** (same as Bhagwat or Bhakti) path worshipping Vishnu, showed an interest in the Vedanta philosophy of the Upanishads. Shri Krishna, belonging to the Varshni tribe must have also shown such interest and gone to the Rishi Ghora Angiras for receiving instructions in the subject. Now, Shri Krishna's ancestor was Yadu, the son Yayati by Devayani who was the daughter of the Asura priest Shukracharya. (She was cursed by Kacha that she will not marry a brahmin and married the Kshatriya Yayati). Shukrachraya (also known as ***Ushanas***) himself was the grandson of Rishi Bhrigu. The Bhargava clan must have held Shri Krishna in high regard because of this connection to Bhrigu and therefore preserved his philosophical teachings. Shaunaka muni, himself a Bhargava, must have known about these teachings and prevailed upon Sauti, whom he met during the twelve year ***yajna*** session conducted by him in the Naimisha forest, to incorporate them in Mahabharata. Thus, though the scene depicted by Sauti about Shri Krishna advising Arjuna on the battlefield is a fiction written to fit the text, the philosophy itself is what Shri Krishna had learnt from Ghora Angiras.

Sauti must have been a mental giant to have stringed together a spiritual guide that is Gita presenting us with a synthesis of the Vedanta philosophy with other philosophies known in Sauti's time namely the Sankhya, Yoga and Bhakti (devotion) and the various

paths like the path of knowledge, yoga, action and devotion, for different kinds of personalities.

One intriguing aspect of the Gita relevant to modern times concerns the caste system prevalent in India. One cannot blame Sauti for his views on the caste system because that was the belief current in those days. It is one of the basis of Dharma or code of conduct and is intriguing because it is difficult to explain how God, the creator of all, should differentiate between his children and why a Divine edict was practised only in India is prevailing only in India. The caste system got a temporary knock after Buddhism spread and many subsequent sects like Nath Panth and Mahanubhava Panth did not bother about the caste system or even religion. But that was only temporary.

Thus we see that the philosophy of Gita is what Shri Krishna was very much familiar with and passed on to Sauti. It must be noted from the above analysis what an unusual person Shri Krishna must have been, a warrior, a diplomat, a philosopher, a strategist, a moralist, a family person and a yogi and undoubtedly worthy of being considered as an avatar with all the Divine manifestations mentioned in the tenth chapter of the Gita.

The pious of course are not much bothered about the historical aspects. And for a spiritual seeker, it does not really matter, for all spiritual paths use the impermanent material objects like the body to reach the permanent Soul or Brahman or God.

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MAHABHARATA WAR - A BACKDROP

Gita is supposedly the advice given by Shri Krishna to Arjuna on the first morning of the 18 day Mahabharata war on Kurukshetra battleground. The causes of the family feud and the consequent war lie in the events which occurred couple of generations earlier and expose the fickleness as well as the greatness of man. It goes to show how apparently normal events can have a far reaching consequences. Readers may please note that what follows has been written from an historical standpoint and not from mythological standpoint to which the pious are generally exposed.

THREE GENERATIONS EARLIER

The appropriate point to start this history would be the late 12th century BC when king Shantanu, 42nd in the lineage of the lunar dynasty of the Aryan kings (as given in the *Bhagwat Purana*), ruled Hastinapur (now part of New Delhi). The roots of the Mahabharata war may be traced to his two marriages.

Shantanu's first marriage Once when Shantanu went hunting, he came across a beautiful woman and fell for her. She agreed to marry him on the condition that he would never question her deeds. He agreed. In the following years, she gave birth to seven children every one of which, as soon as it were born, she would take to the river and drown it. Shantanu became sad but could not question her because of the mutual agreement. However, when the next child was born he secretly followed her and stopped her from

drowning the boy. She revealed that she was the River Ganga personified and had to drown the first seven children because of a curse. The eighth child was to have survived and was to be handed over to Shantanu but now that he had broken his promise she would leave him taking the son with her. Ganga left with the son but returned him to Shantanu when he grew to be a youth well versed in all branches of knowledge and in martial arts. The boy was named Devavrata and grew to be a brave warrior and a wise person, well versed in the code of righteous behaviour (i.e. *Dharma*). It was expected the he would succeed Shantanu, but events took a different turn. One may trace the root cause of the Mahabharata war to these events.

Shatanu's second marriage Shantanu once came across a fisherman's daughter named Satyavati and fell in love with her. Her father agreed to give her in marriage to Shantanu on the condition that it would be her son who shall succeed him on the throne. Shantanu refused but was depressed in spirit. When Devavrata noticed this and found the reason he coaxed his father into the marriage. In order that his father be able to keep the promise regarding the succession to the throne, Devavarata himself denounced his right to the throne and besides took a vow that he would remain a celibate and would not get married so as to eliminate any chance of successors being born to him. This vow was so severe that Devavrata was called by people as Bhishma or severely frightening. Even today a serious vow is called a *Bhishma-pratidnya* or vow of Bhishma. Thus Shantanu was married to Satyavati. In return Shantanu gave a boon to Devavrata that he would die only when he wished it so.

Pandu and Dhritarashtra Shantanu had two sons from Satyavati. The elder son died in a battle. The second son Vichtravirya was a weakling but Bhishma supported him having the welfare of Hastinapur at his heart. In order to get Vichitravirya married Bhishma invaded Kashi and won three daughters of the king of

Kashi. One of them prayed that she was already in love with another prince and was let go. Vichitravirya was thus married to the two remaining princesses Ambika and Ambalika. Vichitravirya however died without a son and heir to the throne. By the custom of those days it was permissible to breed a son through the brother of the husband and the heir would be considered as legal. Note that this process was aimed not for pleasure but only towards the goal of procreation. There was no living brother to Vichitravirya but before her marriage to Shantanu, Satyavati had a son from the Rishi Parashara, grandson of the great Rishi Vashishtha. This son was the famous great Rishi Vyasa who edited the Vedas, wrote Puranas and after the Mahabharata war composed the book *Jaya* which is the precursor to the epic Mahabharata). Satyavati, in consultation with Bhishma, called upon Vyasa to beget children for the two wives of the late Vichitravirya in order to have a successor to the throne. Unfortunately the elder son Dhritarashtra was born blind while the second son was anaemic and was therefore named Pandu. At the request of a slave of the palace, Vyasa also begot a son from her. This was Vidura who later turned out to be a great learned sage and played a significant role in the affairs of the kingdom.

PANDAVAS AND KAURAVAS

Because Dhritarashtra was blind, Bhishma who was a kind of regent, made Pandu ascend the throne. Pandu had two wives, Kunti, daughter of King Ugrasen of Yadava clan and Madri, the daughter of the king of Madra in Punjab. Kunti was thus the sister of Vasudeva, Shri Krishna's father. Pandu had three sons from Kunti and two from Madri. Kunti's sons were Yudhishtira (or Dharma), Arjuna (or Partha) and Bhima. Madri's sons were named Nakul and Sahadeva.

Dhritarashtra was married to Gandhari the princess of Gandhar (now Kandahar in Afganistan). In deference to the blindness of her

husband Gandhari throughout her life covered her eyes by tying cloth over them. They had hundred sons known as the Kauravas and a daughter. The eldest son was Duryodhana who was very ambitious and cunning. His second son was Duhshasana who was also like his elder brother. These brothers hated the Pandavas because they were better in character as well as in other qualities like bravery etc. and were liked by all.

Actually Pandu was not the real father of these sons. Legend goes that before her marriage, Kunti had served the great Rishi Durvasa who gave her a boon of six mantras which she could use whenever she wished for a child. (Pandu was anaemic and unable to bear children so Mahabharata seems to use this good ruse to legalise Kunti's and Madri's children as Pandu's. But note that this system was socially accepted in those days and the Pandavas were never considered inferior in any way because of this. Also considering the qualities of the five sons there is no doubt that their real fathers were no ordinary persons.) Immediately after she received the boon Kunti, out of curiosity, tried one mantra while she was a virgin and prayed to the Sun God. He came in person and gave a son to Kunti. Kunti was frightened and secretly put the baby in a basket and left him afloat in the river. He was found by a charioteer and was named Karna also known as Radheya because his adopted mother's name was Radha. When he grew up he joined the Kaurava group and was very close to Duryodhana. Karna played a major role in the Mahabharata war and led it after Bhishma retired from the war after getting seriously injured. Karna is considered as one of the greatest characters of the Epic Mahabharata, thrown by fate into the Kaurava camp in spite of being the eldest of the Pandavas and never wavering in his allegiance to Duryodhana even when the secret of his birth was revealed to him. He was as good as Arjuna in war and had to be killed by a trick arranged by Shri Krishna. Thus traditionally one speaks of only five Pandavas. According to the above legend Yudhishtira the eldest of the Pandavas was born from Yama the

god of death, Arjuna from Indra the king of the gods and Bhima from Vayu the wind god. Yudhisthira was known for his truthfulness and morals while Bhima was very strong even as a child and became an expert in wielding the club or mace. Kunti passed on two mantras to Madri the other wife of Pandu. Her sons Nakul and Sahadeva were begot from the twin Ashwinikumars, the twin deities of medicine. Yudhisthira was known for his truthfulness and morals while Bhima was very strong even as a child and became an expert in wielding the club or mace.

Pandu's death and Dhritarashtra's enthronement Pandu died while he was in forest. Madri committed Sati by burning herself on the funeral pyre. Probably because Yudhishtira the eldest son of Pandu was too young, Bhishma enthroned Dhritarashtra even though he was blind.

After their father's death the Pandavas along with Kunti returned to Hastinapur and stayed with their uncle Dhritarashtra. Both Kauravas and Pandavas studied together under the royal Guru Dronacharya, the martial arts, especially archery, the main weapon of those days as well as other branches of knowledge.

Kauravas' enmity Pandavas and Kauravas studied Shastras and marshal arts, especially archery together under the royal Guru Dronacharya. The Kauravas always bore jealousy and animosity towards the Pandavas who were liked by all due to their excellent skills and personal qualities. Yudhisthira was known for his truthfulness and morals while Bhima was very strong even as a child and became an expert in wielding the club or mace. Arjuna was the best archer with unsurpassed skill with bow and arrow and was the most favourite student of Dronacharya. Duryodhana also was an expert with the mace. The Kauravas out of jealousy always tried to create trouble for the Pandavas and even tried to kill them by poisoning and by burning them, but Pandavas were saved by their well-wishers especially Vidura and Shri Krishna, who were

aware of the vengeful nature of the Kauravas. The feud between the Pandavas and the Kauravas grew as the boys reached adulthood.

Pandavas marry Draupadi Kauravas, especially Duryodhana and Duhshasana once tried to poison Bhima but failed due to his strong constitution. Another time they plotted to burn them alive by inviting them to a house which they had especially built with inflammable materials. The Pandavas escaped but to create a false impression that they had died and thus avoid further attempts on their life, they had to travel around incognito, posing as Brahmin mendicants, hiding from the Kauravas lest they would be murdered. During this incognito stage they reached the kingdom of Panchala where a competition was held by the king Drupada in order choose a bridegroom for his daughter Draupadi or Panchali (also known as Krishnaa since she was dark complexioned). The competition consisted of hitting the eye of a revolving fish with an arrow while taking the aim through its reflection in water. While going around for alms the Pandavas reached the place of the competition. The difficult test was won by Arjuna. The Pandavas returned to their home with the princess Draupadi. Their mother, not knowing that Arjuna had won a princess, instructed them to share the gains equally among the five brothers. As they could not go against her command all five of them married Draupadi. (There are other examples of polyandry mentioned in the Puranas. But note that there are tribes in the northern hill regions of India where polyandry is still practised. Since social customs are well merged with religion it is difficult to change such practices.) Draupadi’s time was divided equally among the brothers and there does not seem to be any complaints. Shri Krishna was a cousin of Pandavas and always supported them. He was especially close to Arjuna. Draupadi considered Shri Krishna as her brother while Arjuna was married to Shri Krishna's sister Subhadra for which again shri Krishna was responsible.

Pandavas get Indraprastha When Pandavas became older they asked for their share of the kingdom. Dhritarashtra who was heavily under the influence of his sons refused but finally he had to give in and gave them a small piece of kingdom nearby. Its capital was Indraprastha which is also now part of New Delhi. People were very happy in their kingdom.

Pandavas kingdom Lost by gambling The Kauravas, advised by their maternal uncle Shakuni, the king of Gandhar, made a plan by which Pandavas would lose their kingdom in a gambling bout since it was not possible to win against Pandavas in any battle. It was considered the duty of a Kshatriya not to refuse to a duel or a gambling game. Taking advantage of this custom, Duryodhana invited Yudhishtira for a gambling bout. They used loaded dice which the Pandavas did not know. Yudhishtira who was known for his righteousness and truthfulness lost all he had including the kingdom. Duryodhana then challenged him to continue to play by putting on bet the liberty of his brothers which also was lost. Thus the brave Pandavas became slaves to the Kauravas. Now that the Pandavas were slaves the Kauravas unfortunately pulled Draupadi (who was under menstruation at that time) into the court where the game was being played. Duhshasana even tried to undress and molest her. Unfortunately all this was happening under the eyes of Bhishma and the other elders who had to keep quiet for keeping the unity of the kingdom. The episodes created a big furore in the court and it was finally decided that Pandavas should be condoned from being slaves and instead they should be banished to forest for twelve years and after that for one more year they should remain incognito. If they were identified during the incognito period then they were again to go to forest for another twelve years. Pandavas had to accept this proposal and they left the kingdom with Draupadi.

Coming out of incognito period Twelve years passed during which Kauravas tried a lot to trouble and humiliate the Pandavas but

every time they failed. During the thirteenth year they went to King Virat as servants under different guises. Draupadi also remained as servant in the palace. Kauravas tried to discover their whereabouts but could not succeed. But towards the end, Kauravas invaded Virat to take away his wealth of the cattle when Arjuna had to take part in the battle and defeat the Kauravas. Thus, Arjuna was discovered. However that day was also the end of their one year incognito period. They therefore immediately claimed their kingdom back.

But things were not so simple. They had completed one lunar year (354 days) but Kauravas insisted they were meaning solar year (365 days). (See notes at the end of Ch. 8) This dispute was not resolved and finally it was decided that only a full scale war would decide the question of inheritance. To give Kauravas a final chance Shri Krishna tried to mediate but the Kauravas were blind with arrogance and power and tried to even arrest Shri Krishna. War became inevitable. But this was not a sniper war of today. Both parties conferred regarding the date of the war as well as the rules. Among the rules was that the war was to start every day at sunrise and the warriors were to stop fighting at sunset. Thus the Mahabharata war is called a *Dharmayuddha* or a war fought according to the rules of *Dharma* or a code of conduct.

Decision of war Both parties sent calls to their relations and supporters and people came from as far away as Afganistan which had Aryan kingdoms as well as from the east and the south. The venue of the war was Kurukshetra not far from New Delhi. (You may find it on a map of India.) Shri Krishna played an interesting role in the war. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna went to meet Shri Krishna for his assistance in the war. Both reached his palace early morning and waited for Shri Krishna to wake up. Proudly, Duryodhana sat near his head while Arjuna sat humbly at his feet. When Shri Krishna woke up he first saw Arjuna and asked what he wanted. Thus the discussion started. Shri Krishna said that he

himself would support one side and lend his army to the other. He also said that he would not handle any arms during the war. Duryodhana opted for the army while Arjuna opted for Shri Krishna. Shri Krishna acted as Arjuna's charioteer during the war and saved him from death many times. He was intelligent and shrewd and it is this shrewdness which mainly made Pandavas win the war. Bhishma. Dronacharya fought on Kauravas side as their duty but their heart was with Arjuna and Yudhishtir. However they did not become lax in their duties. The tales of the war and how Shri Krishna's tricks saved Pandavas is interesting and legendary but that is a different topic.

ARJUNA FEELS REMORSE

On the first day of the war Arjuna asked Shri Krishna to steer the chariot to the centre of the battlefield so that he can have an overview of the armies. But Shri Krishna advised him that he was merely doing his duty. That advice in expanded form is Gita. On the morning of the first day of the war, both armies were facing each other. Before the war was to start, Arjuna asked Shri Krishna, his charioteer to take the chariot to the centre between the armies in order to have a look at the warriors gathered there, because it was necessary to know with whom he was going to fight. Shri Krishna did so and indicated to Arjuna his elders like his grand-uncle Bhishma, his guru Dronacharya and other kings.

When Arjuna saw among both the armies his elders, brothers, cousins, uncles, friends and relatives and even grand-children (Arjuna was 65 years old at the time of this war. Shri Krishna was 83, Dronacharya 85 and Bhishma was more than 100 years old; Vasudeo, father of Shri Krishna did not fight but was 140 years old. It appears that people lived long in those days). the reality of fighting his own kith and kin, especially his grand-uncle Bhishma and Guru Dronacharya faced him. He realised the genocide that was going to occur for the sake of winning the kingdom and in a

despondent mood, overcome with grief and compassion Arjuna said to Shri Krishna, "By seeing all these friends and relatives gathered here for war, I am feeling un-nerved and my mouth has gone dry. I am feeling confused. I do not think we will gain by killing these friends and relatives. The persons for whose benefit we desire the kingdom are those who have come here to sacrifice their life and wealth. I can see that this war will destroy many family lineages and when I see the horror of this destruction, how can I ignore the sins of that destruction? Because such a destruction leads to the destruction of morals. I am wondering how we became ready to commit this sin in the first place!" So saying Arjuna kept down his bow and sat quietly.

This was a shock to Shri Krishna. He said to Arjuna, "How did these thoughts of compassion, unbecoming to an Aryan, came into your mind in this time of crises? Shed this weakness and get ready for the war."

But Arjuna did not move. He said, "How can I strike persons like Bhishma and Dronacharya whom I should actually be worship? The blood will be on my hands. I am really confused and am not able to think what is right and what is wrong. Consider me your disciple and advise me what is proper." And then Arjuna fell silent. Shri Krishna then gave him the advice on duties of a person towards himself, the society and God. This advice presented as a dialogue between Arjuna and Shri Krishna is the Gita. It convinced Arjuna that he has to fight the war more as his *dharma* (righteous conduct and duty) as a *Kshatriya* (warrior caste) rather than for the gains of the kingdom. Thus convinced, he picked up his bow and arrows and got up to fight the war.

Portrayal Shri Krishna as Supreme God As readers would have concluded from the Prologue, Gita is not a factual report of the dialogue between Arjuna and Shri Krishna, if it really occurred at all. It is a later addition by Sauti to the Mahabharata, of which Gita

is a part. It was written some centuries after Shri Krishna was deified and considered as an avatar of Lord Vishnu thus enabling Sauti to present Shri Krishna as the Supreme God. Having assigned the role of an avatar to Shri Krishna, he is mentioned in Gita (and Dnyaneshwari) as Bhagwan (God). In fact much of the advice to Arjuna rendered by Shri Krishna is in this role of Bhagwan which Arjuna also recognises. Thus Gita is usually mentioned as Bhagvadgita or Gita told by Bhagwan.

Both Shri Krishna and Arjuna are mentioned by various other names in the Bhagvadgita, but we shall maintain the names Shri Krishna and Arjuna in this translation for the sake of convenience.

Dhritarashtra, being blind could not participate in the war. Mahabharata (Sauti's addition) tells us that he requested Shri Krishna that he should be able to learn about the events of the war. Shri Krishna granted divine sight to Dhritarashtra's charioteer Sanjaya so that he could see the events of the war and describe them to Dhritarashtra. Thus Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya also knew the contents of Gita almost at the same time as Arjuna. But blinded by love for his sons it had no effect on Dhritarashtra. What he was interested in was only whether his sons were winning or not.

Life struggle compared with Kurukshetra war Mr Yardi has commented on this situation in very beautifully and analytically comparing the war to our struggles in life in the following words (Bhagvadgita as a Synthesis, M.R.Yardi, 1991. See Prologue): "Usually the author (meaning Sauti) gives an indication of the purport of the text in the very first sentence. Gita calls Kurukshetra the *dharmakshetra* implying thereby that the Pandavas are waging a righteous war against the Kauravas. The human mind vacillates between two tendencies, the divine and the demoniacal, each struggling for the supremacy over the other. Life is therefore the battleground for the settlement of great moral issues. This is true not only for the individual but also for the society as a whole and

the human race. If man follows the path of *dharma* in a disinterested spirit, he grows in spiritual stature. But if he follows the path of *adharma (i.e. lack of dharma),* he sinks into the very depths of degradation. The blind king stands for a man who is blinded by self-love and affection for his wife and family, and who, instead of following the path of duty, spends his life-time in the mad pursuit of wealth, power and domination. This attitude naturally leads to conflict between individuals and nations. The Gita tells us how to resolve such conflicts and to attain salvation from the turmoil of life even while living."

Epilogue to the Mahabharata war The war lasted for eighteen days. Only survivors were the Pandavas, Dronacharya's son Ashwathama, Shri Krishna and a few others. Kauravas and their allies were completely decimated. It was one of the greatest genocide in history were young strong blood vanished. All Pandava's sons died so there was no heir to the hard won kingdom. Ashwathama as a revenge on behalf of the Kauravas tried to kill the foetus of Abhimanyu's child (Arjuna's grand child) but Shri Krishna by his yogic powers made it survive. Thus Pandavas had a heir after all. His name was Parikshit. Bhishma who had a boon of dying by his own will waited in injured condition until Uttarayana, the northward travel of the sun started. (Currently it starts on December 21. See notes under Ch 8.)

Yudhishtir became the king and reigned for 36 years. Just towards the end of his reign, Shri Krishna, while sitting under a tree in a forest (near Somnath in Gujarat state, Western part of India), was shot by an arrow in the leg by a hunter who mistakenly thought he was shooting a deer. Thus Shri Krishna died after an illustrious career at the age of about 118 years. He was cremated at Prabhas on the bank of the river Patan nearby. Shri Krishna was the king of the Yadava clan and his kingdom was Dwaraka, an isle off the west coast of Gujarat. Soon after his death the Yadavas fought among themselves and killed each other. Dwaraka was swallowed

by sea. When the news of Shri Krishna's death came the Pandavas felt like orphans. Arjuna was given the task of escorting the widows of the Yadavas to Hastinapur but while Arjuna was escorting them the tribes on the way attacked him and took the women away. Arjuna had no power left as he was now old. He returned to Hastinapur shamefaced and very soon all the brothers went to the forest for passing their last days as was the custom in those days. Parikshit succeeded the throne.

Hindu tradition believes that Kaliyoga began with the death of Shri Krishna. After putting together various types of scientific, historical and other information Mr. Yardi concludes the date of Mahabharata war as 1011 BC give or take 50 years and in no case earlier than 1136 BC. This agrees fairly well with the broad estimate of approximately 1400 BC by the historians but differs greatly from the orthodox Hindu tradition which instead of 975 BC puts the start of the Kaliyuga at 3101BC said to be based on a single unsubstantiated statement of the famous astronomer-mathematician-philosopher Aryabhat.

YOGIRAJ SHRI SHANKAR MAHARAJ

Yogiraj Shri Shankar Maharaj was undoubtedly one of the greatest saints of Maharashtra in the modern age. He was an Auliya or Avadhut, a term used for yogis who have reached perfection and have achieved Siddhis (occult powers). He belonged to the Nath Panth (Sect), though he did not follow its their dress or mannerisms. He took samadhi in Pune at the age of about 150 years on April 28th 1947, an event which he had postponed for seventeen years at the request of his disciple Dr Nagesh Dhaneshwar. His Samadhi Mandir which

houses his physical body is in Pune on the Pune-Satara road about 10 Km from Pune Railway station. Hundreds of devotees visit the Mandir every day to pay their respects and receive blessings. It is strongly believed and experienced by his devotees that even though Maharaj is no longer in his physical body, he still looks after the welfare of his devotees. There are many instances reported by his devotees and disciples of his having appeared before them either in his own form or through the bodies of others in the time of crisis.

Leading people towards God Maharaj did not have any fixed headquarters, no Math. He was his own headquarters. Neither did he have any possessions. He did not stay in one place for long. His disciples' homes were his own. He moved mainly between Bombay, Pune, Ahmednagar (Nagar), Solapur, Nashik and Akluj (Malinagar Sugar factory) where he had numerous disciples and devotees. Maharaj travelled widely to visit his devotees who considered themselves to be privileged to have Maharaj visit and live with them.

Wherever Maharaj went, he organised through his devotees, festivals or programs of Bhajans, discourses (Kirtan) and reading of religious philosophical texts (Parayan) like Dnyaneshwari (the famous commentary in Marathi on Gita written by Dnyaneshwar Maharaj seven hundred years ago), Dasbodh (the spiritual and practical guide by Samarth Ramdas), Gurucharitra (the chronicle of the two avatars of Shri Dattatreya, Shripad Shrivallabh and Shri Narasimha Saraswarti) and Bhagwat (a Purana depicting the glory of Lord Vishnu), thus turning peoples' minds towards God. He used to ask worthy persons to give discourses and used to sit

quietly and listen to Kirtans etc. Maharaj particularly loved Dnyaneshwari which he fondly called Dnyani. Maharaj did not give discourses himself because of his lisped speech. But he motivated his disciples to give discourses on Dnyaneshwari. In Pune, Taisaheb Mehendale, wife of Raosaheb Mehendale, a well known barrister, was one such disciple who regularly gave not only discourses on Dnyneshwari but arranged celebration of other festivals like Gokulashtami and Shivaratri which hundreds of people attended.

He had Muslim devotees too. One of his disciples in Pune was Khansaheb who owned a Watch Company in Pune. Another was Mr Nuri from Bombay, a friend of Raosahb Mehendale. Many other Muslims took advice from Maharaj. He used to answer to their difficulties by quoting extracts from the holy Koran. He used to say that Islam means peace. Prophet Mohammed preached peace, advised not to kill, not to steal, not to tell lies, not to spend time idly in luxury, not to charge interest on loan etc. He told the Muslim devotees that real mosque lies in a pure heart. The true teaching of Islam is to keep infinite faith in God and love is God.

Birth and early age Actually very little definite information is available about the birth and early life of Maharaj. Whatever little is known is from what his devotees claim he had told them but unfortunately these accounts differ in details. For example there are three different stories about his birth, two of them saying that Maharaj was found in a jungle by his childless foster-parents who were instructed in a vision to search for him. But the most reliable is probably what Maharaj himself told his disciple Dr. Nagesh Dhaneshwar. According to this, he was born in about year 1800 at

Mangalwedhe (near Pandharpur) in a brahmin family named Upasani. This was during the rule of the last Peshwa at Pune from whose hands Maharaj, as a brahmin boy, had received Dakshina. When he was a boy, events led to his meeting Swami Samarth of Akkalkot who gave him sparshdiksha i.e. initiation by touch. Later he travelled to Himalayas for hard Tapas

Return from the Himalayas On returning from Himalayas he spent time with Siddha-yogis in and around Vriddheshwar (near Nagar) which is known as the centre for meditation of many Nath Siddhas. During the early British rule in Pune, a British collector developed faith in Maharaj and considered him as his Guru. Maharaj went with him to England and returned ten years later after his disciple reached perfection in the yoga path. It is not clear when exactly these events occurred but it must have been much after 1814, the year when the British took over Pune after defeating Peshwas and established a civil administration.

There is a puzzling aspect in the accounts of his activities from the time he left Himalayas and returned to Maharashtra. For example, Maharaj is said to have told that he was known by other names elsewhere. In Gwalior region he was known as Gourishankar and took samadhi there. He once told that he had been at Raver in Khandesh region where he was known as Kunwarswami and that his samadhi temple is at a place called Waghoda where he took samadhi in 1878. (This is the also the year when his Guru Shri Swami Samarth of Akkalkot also took samadhi). The puzzling thing is that Maharaj left samadhis in these places and appeared in body as Shankar Maharaj in Maharashtra. Yet one must also remember that he was a Siddha-yogi and such

feats would not have been impossible for him. Nevertheless it does present a puzzling account to the common man who would be happier with a materially rational account. Another piece of information received from Maharaj himself was that he spent some time with famous singers and Pakhavaj (a two sided percussion instrument) players and became a talented singer and Pakhavaj player, but gave up these activities after Shri Swami Samarth told him not to waste his time in such pursuits. Shri Swami Samarth taught him various aspects of yoga and tantra system and then authorised him to have his own disciples. But again chronology of these events is lacking.

Return to Maharashtra Some sixty to seventy years must have passed between his leaving for Himalayas and appearing in Maharashtra. He first came to Solapur and stayed in the Shubharai Math with Janardanbua, the chief of the Math. Janardanbua became one of the main disciples of Maharaj. In later years also, whenever Maharaj came to Solapur he used to stay in the Shubharai Math. From there he visited the Samadhi of his Guru at Akkalkot about 30Km distant. His Solapur visit must have been around the year 1900 or a little earlier.<P>

From Solapur, Maharaj went to Triambakeshwar near Nashik, where one of the twelve Jyotirlingas is located. Here he stayed with Mr Rambhau Akolkar, a lawyer. Akolkar family had a cow which was not giving milk. Maharaj asked to milk her and the cow started giving milk. From Nashik, Maharaj came to Pune. It is not clear when exactly he came or whom he first met in Pune. Earliest written memories about him date back from the early twentieth century. In about 1908, at

Nagar 120 Km from Pune, he appeared mysteriously in the garb of a tall fakir before Dr Dhaneshwar, when the latter was a boy and yet to become his favoured disciple. Even earlier, in around 1900 he had saved Dr Dhaneshwar's would-be father-in-law from serious illness in Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh. In 1927 he again met Dr Dhaneshwar at Daund, a town close to Pune. Dr Dhaneshwar was on his way back to his home-town nagar. Maharaj this time was in his usual bent appearance. Maharaj followed him to Nagar. He had many disciples in Nagar, well known among them being Dr Dhaneshwar and his father, and Major Ganesh Abhyankar and his son Dattatreya Abhyankar.

The earliest memories about Maharaj from Pune proper are from 1938 onwards, written by Yogi Dnyananath (Mr Bapu Ranade) who met Maharaj in that year. Maharaj at that time already had many devotees and disciples in Pune, well-known among them being barrister Raosaheb Mehendale and his wife Taisaheb Mehendale, Mama Dhekne, the singer Yellubai Mane, Baburao Rudra, Mr Vasudeo M. Pandit, Yogi Dnyananath and Mr S. B. Patwardhan. (The last three are still living). Maharaj chose Pune for his samadhi. Maharaj had many disciles in Solapur and at the Malinagar Sugar Factory at Akluj near Solapur also. Mr G.K. Pradhan, Mr Keshavbhai Asher and his wife Maniben from Akluj/Mumbai. Shri Janardanbua of the Shubharaya Math of Solapur, Mr Omkarnath Bhasme from Solapur. Mr V. K. Kulkarni from Akluj, now living in Kolhapur. His disciples came from all strata of society.

He blessed many families and individuals during this period guiding them in the spiritual path. People came

to Maharaj both for material as well as spiritual blessings. Those of the latter category were few but it was those that Maharaj loved best.

His appearance and habits Though Maharaj belonged to Nath Panth, he never followed the dress or other mannerisms of the sect. In fact, looking at Maharaj, one would not have believed he was a yogi of the highest calibre. The external appearance of Maharaj has been described as that of *Ashtavakra* or bent in eight places. Maharaj had a short stature, but was *ajanubahu* i.e. having long hands reaching below his knees. Most noticeable were his large and bright eyes and a childlike expression on his face. The traditional photograph of Maharaj depicts him with a beard, but towards later years he was clean shaven. Many photographs and pictures of Maharaj with clean shaven face wearing different types of garments may be seen at the Samadhi in Pune. He often had brandy bottle in his hand and a hunter whip with him. He often used to address people by the swear words, but without malice. Actually it was believed that when Maharaj abused somebody it got rid of that person's past Karmas or misfortunes. His immense kindness and compassion were consistent with his being a Nath Panthi.

Some yogis behave normally in society and live, at least externally, as per social norms but some of those who have reached perfection are beyond all social bonds and rules and may behave abnormally. Some behave like a child (Balavritti or childlike tendency), some may behave eccentrically like madmen (Unmattavritti or excited tendency) while some may behave in very strange way living like a ghost in odd places (Pishacchavritti or Ghost tendency). As they enjoy

internal bliss of the experience of the Brahman they are not much bothered about the external world except that they continue guiding and helping people in their own way. In this state he may not even bother if he eats or sleeps or wears clothes or whether it is hot, cold or humid. Many Avadhuts remain in one of the above three states. Maharaj was known to exhibit a mixture of the three tendencies.

Maharaj was fond of smoking Honeydew (popularly known as Pila Hathi) cigarettes. He was also fond of drinking brandy and appeared to be often intoxicated. He used to like the scent (*attar*) of Hina and loved music. Wherever he went his disciples would welcome him and he stayed with whomever he pleased to stay, rich or poor. Maharaj used to drink with a purpose. His drunk appearance helped keeping unwanted people away. Only those people who saw Maharaj beyond the external looks could come to him. There are incidents when Maharaj drank and another person nearby got drunk. Some people to whom Maharaj gave a glass of brandy and asked them to drink it told later that it was not liquor but a nice testing sherbet or coconut water.

Maharaj knew many other saints well. He and J. Krishnamurthi knew each other and had met briefly at Pune Railway station when the latter was in transit. There was a female fakir named Hazarat Babajan and a male fakir called Fakirbaba in Pune whom Maharaj visited often. Like his Guru Shri Swami Samarth, Maharaj was not an orthodox person. He never bothered about the external formalities like caste barriers, untouchability and external cleanliness about which the orthodox yogis are so particular. In fact there

is no record of Maharaj ever having met the orthodox yogis in Pune or elsewhere.

All saints have miracles happening around them and Maharaj is no exception. Maharaj used his powers to help his devotees. What looks to us as miracles is however not a very unusual feat for an yogi. The miracles include knowledge of past and future events, creation of matter, going from one place to another instantly, being in several places at the same time, feeding a large multitude from a small quantity of food and so on. Maharaj did these miracles to draw people to spiritual path, teach them basic philosophy of spiritual life and to benefit them in general.

SAMADHI Seventeen years had passed since the time Maharaj had postponed his samadhi at the request of Dr Dhaneshwar. Maharaj decided to take samadhi on Shukla Ashtami of month Vaishakh by Hindu lunar calender, when the planetary positions were proper. This fell on Monday 28th April 1947, Ten days before the event Maharaj broke all outside contacts. Only the usual group used to visit him at Mama Dhekne's house where he was staying. Not a word was spoken. On the Saptami day, that is the day before the samadhi, he told Mami (wife of Mama Dhekne) , "Give me just a cup of tea. No cigarettes also. Inside the shelf spread a small mattress and keep a cushion. I am going to take bath and sit there. I don't want to speak a word nor meet anyone. The door should not be opened." And he did accordingly. Mama and Mami were sitting the whole night in front of the shelf keeping watch. At four o'clock in the morning voice came from inside the shelf, "Make further arrangements. Take care of this

material body. This flame of Dnyanadeo is now leaving it."

Word spread. It was April 28th. People gathered to have a last sight of the body. Next day around noon the body was taken in procession to the place selected earlier by Maharaj and by the route also indicated by him. In the background of sounds of "Bm Bm Bholenath" in praise of lord Shiva the body was kept in the ground at about five o'clock in the evening and in no time only a mound of earth covered with garlands was all that could be seen. Everybody returned from that lonely jungle except Mr Baburao Rudra who tended to the samadhi and the daily service there for several years.

APPEARANCES AFTER SAMADHI Even after samadhi on 28th April 1947, Maharaj continues to meet his disciples, guide and help them. This is not unusual for yogi saints who continue to shower their benevolence even after taking samadhi. Whenever their assistance is prayed for by a devotee (or even without it), they are known to appear before them physically or in dreams. Shri Narasimha Saraswati, Swami Samarth of Akkalkot, Gajanan Maharaj, Shri Saibaba of Shirdi are a few well-known examples of such Yogi saints besides Shri Shankar Maharaj.

His physical appearances after samadhi may look strange to a materialistic person even though there is a large number of instances where, in the western world, Jesus Christ and his mother Virgin Mary are said to have appeared before many people in vision either to help or to strengthen their faith. The best example is that of Bernadette whose vision of Virgin Mary on 11th

February 1858 gave the western world the gift of the famous curative waters of Lourdes in France. Those familiar with yogic powers take these things for granted.

Mr V.M.Pandit, one of the disciples of Maharaj still living, recounts how Maharaj appeared through the medium of the bodies of his sister-in-law and of Dr Dhaneshwar to save him from personal problems. Late Mr Datta Abhyankar also has recounted to me how Maharaj visited him and saved his two year old daughter from a serious illness nearly eighteen years after samadhi. It is a confirmed belief of his devotees that Maharaj had been using the body of Dinesh Kulkarni as a medium until recently and many people consider him no different from Shri Shankar Maharaj. I have met half a dozen persons who have been saved by Maharaj from personal crisis when they had even not heard about maharaj. Now they are sincere devotees of Maharaj.

What Maharaj taught Maharaj did not give discourses himself but as mentioned earlier, used other disciples like Taisaheb Mehendale to teach the principles of Dnyaneshwari which he loved. Many of his teachings are well brought out in the two novels by Mr G. K. Pradhan. He used his disciples to help mankind. He was very particular for example that Dr Dhaneshwar did not use his medical practice to amass wealth but to serve the sick.

Maharaj never encouraged anybody to take up spiritual path at the cost of one's worldly duties. For example he never allowed Dr Dhaneshwar to participate in the group during his consultancy hours. He said, "Duty

first". He encouraged to carry out your worldly duties and simultaneously progress spiritually through proper attitude to life as described in Dnyaneshwari. He also said, "You must not give up efforts. If you have to appear for an exam then it is you who have to prepare for it." What he meant was that even if a Guru gives guidance and strength it is your own efforts that make your spiritual progress.

Some people asked him once about which Guru they should follow. His reply was : If you want to find truth then be your own Guru. Do not run about searching for a Guru. When Sattva attribute of your mind has grown sufficiently then your Guru will automatically come to you. Do not expect your Guru to solve your material problems.

He also told, "Serve your parents who have given you birth and taken care of you since childhood. That will guide you in your life and make you happy. Also serve the family deity. The family deity takes care of your family. Worship regularly. This will bring regularity in your life. Your nature will change and the Guru designated for you will come to you."

He also said, "Everyone in this world is after happiness. But nobody bothers to think about what really is happiness. Unfulfilled desires, jealousy, greed, ambition etc. create sorrow in our life. Eliminating them can alone create happiness in our life. It is a mistake to think that happiness can be obtained by external things without getting rid of our internal shortcomings. Reading various kinds philosophies can only create ego. We have lost the ability to think

independently. We have forgotten that happiness and peace are to be obtained through one's own efforts."

"I never feel I want this and that. Therefore I do not know what is pleasure and what is sorrow. There is ceaseless bliss in me. There is nothing left for me to gain and I have nothing that can be lost. I never feel that I should preach some definite dogma. There is no veil between what God has created and me."

He warned, "Do not go after Tantric practices. Such people waste their life and finally resort to cheating. It is much better to achieve success through your own efforts than through the Tantric techniques." This must be considered as a warning from an authority since maharaj himself was well versed in Tantras.

Some people asked Maharaj about the fear which they felt about many things like body, death etc. Maharaj said, consistent with Dnyaneshwari, that everything in this world is destructible therefore there should not be any fear about that. One should realise that you are not the body but the soul and the soul is indestructible. Once this is realised bliss will replace fear. One should also be confident that God is your great saviour.

Maharaj loved Dnyaneshwari, which he fondly called by the name Dnyani. An advice Maharaj gave to almost all was to study Dnyaneshwari in depth. It is said that one should experience (what is said in) one at least *ovi* of this great work. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj was a great yogi, second in the line of Gahininath with whom Maharaj, according to what he once told Dr Dhaneshwar ar Vridheshwar, was closely connected in earlier lives.

,Motto of Maharaj may be summarised in the words of Dr Dhaneshwar "The aim of a Nath Panthi is to help people without bothering about his own personal liberation. Because of the compassion for all living, he takes birth again and again all over the earth in all communities and not necessarily a ordained a Nath Panthi during that birth. It is because of such selfless liberated souls that the fabric of human society is maintained."

Late Sheikh Abdul Razakshah Biyabani. a retired police officer and a spiritually elevated person. who had studied in depth not only Koran as a Muslim but Gita and Dnyaneshwari as well gave in 1979 or may be 1980, a discourse in the Samadhi premises in which he said,

"Do you think that Shri Shankar Maharaj is not present here? He is everywhere. But this Samadhi is the symbol of his eternal spirit. Do not disfigure this statue here....".

This is then Yogiraj Shri Shankar Maharaj who was and still is a guiding light for all those who need it. You may search for him and may not find him but he will surely find you if you are receptive.

Brief biograhical sketches of some disciples

Among the disciples of Maharaj Dr N. R. Dhaneshwar, Mr G. K. Pradhan, Taisaheb Mehendale and Mr Dattatreya Abhyankar are better known among his devotees. Brief sketches of their life with Maharaj are

given in the following.

Dr N. R. Dhaneshwar

Dr Nagesh Dhaneshwar came from a highly spiritual family. Nagesh (known as Appa at home) grew up in Nagar where his father Ramchandra Dhaneshwar had settled with a teachers job.

Appa had a natural tendency towards medicine and even while he was in school he studied Ayurveda from his neighbour Dr Kadekar, an expert Ayurvedic doctor who advised him to go first to a regular allopathic medical college because knowledge of both the systems would broaden his mind. Appa passed his medical degree exam in 1927 from Grant Medical College Bombay and returned to Nagar.

On the way to Nagar he was invited by the station master of Daund station, where one has to change trains for Nagar, to his home. There he met Maharaj who already knew Appa, having had met him in the guise of a Fakir when Appa was about twelve years old. Appa returned home and found to his surprise that his father also was a disciple of Maharaj. The family was not well-to-do but by providing both money and place through his disciples, Maharaj helped Appa establish his dispensary. At the time of its inauguration, Maharaj said,

"Medical practice is not a business. It a service for the people. There should be no discrimination made between the rich and the poor. There should not be greed for money or for amassing wealth." Appa followed this advice throughout his career. Once he

told, "I am not free to do as I like. I have to do whatever Maharaj instructs. He is not letting me accumulate money. Even at Nagar, he used to tell me every fortnight to clear the balance and distribute the money to poor. Once a friend credited some amount in my account without my knowledge. But Maharaj came to know about it and became angry with me. I at once distributed the money. He keeps a continuous eye on me." Events occurred to convince Appa that Maharaj as Guru loved him more than a mother and since then Appa completely surrendered to Maharaj.

The motto of Maharaj was "Duty first". Maharaj never permitted Appa to join him in the discussions with other devotees during dispesary hours. But both of them used to sit for hours during the night, often without a word being spoken. Once Maharaj stayed in Nagar for nearly six months during which period Maharaj taught Appa all siddhis which he mastered quickly but abandoned as being useless to him. He believed that having been born as a human being one must face one's problems as a human being without taking help of the supernatural siddhis. Maharaj made Dr Dhaneshwar study Dnyaneshwari in depth. Step by step Appa progressed spiritually under the guidance of Maharaj who trained and tested his disciple thoroughly..

Once Maharaj took Appa around Vriddheshwar (about 50 km from Nagar) known for the caves used by Nath yogis for meditation. In one cave he showed Appa the place where Gahininath used to sit for meditation. His other disciples also used to sit around that place. By continued sitting, the stones were worn out to the body shape. Maharaj said that Dr Dhaneshwar also was among them in an arlier birth and assured him that,

"once a Master from Nath Panth initiates you he never forsakes you. He remains in Nath Panth in all births." Maharaj used to say that the relationship between himself and Appa as Guru and disciple has been for the last eight hundred years. Once a Guru accepts you as a disciple, the relationship continues in other births.

Appa faithfully followed the advice given by Maharaj during the inauguration of his dispensary; he practised medicine as a service to people. He never amassed wealth, even if this meant financial strain for his family. He used to charge one rupee for consultation and two annas (twelve paise of today; sixteen annas made a rupee.) per day for medicine; his visit fee was just one rupee. This fee was much less than what others charged in those days and even then many people would default on payments. He used to give medicine free to the poor and sometimes pay from his own pocket for the medicines if need arose. During the second world war, imported medicines were in short supply. Appa used his vast knowledge of Ayurveda to cure people with locally available drugs. He also used to teach medicine and surgery in the Ayurvedic College in Nagar.

In 1930 Maharaj expressed his desire to take samadhi. The combination of the planetary positions known to be excellent for samadhi was approaching and Maharaj wanted to make use of that. But at the request of Dr Dhaneshwar, whom Maharaj had promised to teach all his knowledge, postponed his samadhi by seventeen years when the same combination would return.

After the death of his wife Appa came to live with his eldest son Datta in Pune telling him that he will live only for six more years. He had the task to guide some

people in Pune. After some illness Appa or Dr Dhaneshwar the Siddhayogi left is body on January 13th 1980 in Pune. When the word of Appa's death spread people flocked to his house and then to the cremation ground. Thus ended the material life of a great Siddha-yogi and companion of Maharaj for many lifetimes.

G. K. Pradhan

Born in 1902, Mr Gopal Khanderao Pradhan obtained the commerce degree of Vanijya Visharad from Gujarat Vidyapith (Not the present Gujarat University) and had the opportunity of interacting with leaders and intellectuals in India. After a stint in government service in Madhya Pradesh, he worked as an editor of an English magazine at Ahmedabad. Then he turned to business. Mr Pradhan's first encounter with Maharaj was while Mr Pradhan was secretary to the Managing Director of Saswad Mali Sugar Factory at Malinagar near Solapur. Mr Asher was Factory Manager. Though posted at Akluj, the families of both were in Bombay.

First meeting with Maharaj One day, in 1942, Pradhan left his home in Akluj for going to Bombay. In those days, this required crossing the river by a ferry and catching a bus to the railway station for onward rail journey to Bombay. As Pradhan was going towards the ferry in a car, Maharaj was coming to Akluj at the same time in a bullock cart. As usual Maharaj was making very odd gestures. Other occupants of the car started saying "Maharaj has come!, Maharaj has come!", and were trying to get a glimpse of him. Western educated

Pradhan being an atheist did not even bother to look at him as disliked and hated sadhus and sanyasis, but did have a momentary eye contact with Maharaj. Pradhan was caught in a rain storm while waiting for the bus which did not come. He spent the night in a cowshed and by morning had high fever. He managed to return to the factory where, while he was being treated for the fever and lying down drowsily, he suddenly heard the sound of laughter. He opened his eyes to find Maharaj standing before him. "So you were in a hurry to go to Bombay, no? What happened to that?" So saying, Maharaj vanished. One day, while he was resting in Mr Asher's bunglow, Maharaj entered with a group of seven or eight persons. He was wearing a half-pant and an ordinary looking shirt. Face was twisted to one side, and he had a liquor bottle in one hand. Nobody would have recognised him as a yogi. As soon as he entered he started twisting the knobs of the radio. Pradhan who could not stand this interference shouted at Maharaj who left after a while. Pradhan asked Asher, "Who is this Maharaj you have brought here?" Asher told him that he was a great yogi and asked him to touch his feet. Pradhan replied, "What have I to do with Maharaj? I have seen many such persons. I do not care for them. I am not going to do *namaskar* to anybody. I shall do so only to him who will give me the experience of God."

Next night, Pradhan volunteered to accompany Maharaj to the house of his disciple Mr Janubhau Girme, a well-to-do farmer who lived in his farmhouse bungalow at Navsari about 10 Km away. It was here that Maharaj asked some ash from the Samadhi of Swami Samarth of Akkalkot to be put into Pradhan's mouth. Immediately after this was done, Pradhan's body became stiff like wood. He remained in that state for nearly seven hours

while everybody waited. Pradhan describes his experience of that time as follows: "I suddenly went into samadhi (trance) state and felt I came out of my body; I started moving in the star-studded blue sky. I experienced different types of beautiful tunes and fragrances in that state. When I came out of that state it was eight in the morning. Sun was shining outside. That means I was in that state for nearly seven hours. Shankar Maharaj was before me, looking at me with a smile. I kept my head on his feet and said, ‘ I didn't have any idea of your powers. From today onwards you are my Guru.’ " Later Maharaj told Pradhan, "You are really the disciple of Akkalkot Swami. That old man is insistently gets this done through me."

Thus, a totally atheist Pradhan was completely transformed by Maharaj in no time. He used to do daily worship and the routine like meditation and Japa assigned by his Guru. He also used to do ritual readings of holy works like Gurucharitra and Dnyaneshwari. He had done readings of Gurucharitra in a single sitting of eight to ten hours not once but more than hundred times. Yogavashishta was one of the books he used to read regularly. Pradhan was a pursuer of knowledge. He used to debate with Maharaj. Once when Maharaj offered Pradhan that he may ask for whatever he wanted, Pradhan chose to ask for Knowledge and got it. In spiritual parlance, the word Knowledge means realisation of the truth that you are not different from the Supreme Brahman. People who read Upanishads and similar texts already know about it, but that is only information and not knowledge. The true *knowledge* is that which can only be experienced. For this one must meditate until the veil of ignorance vanishes and one realises the truth from inside. This knowledge is

therefore to be experienced internally and cannot be obtained by external means. A Siddha Guru like Shri Shankar Maharaj can remove this veil by his powers, if he so wishes.

Once when Mr Pradhan was in England during 1946-47 in connection with his business and lived as a paying guest in London with an old and kind landlady, he received information about his father's death. Pradhan felt deep grief because he could not be by his father's side at the time of his death. While he was sitting in this sorrowful mood in his room, Shri Shankar Maharaj appeared before him. Seeing him Pradhan could not contain his emotions and wept with his head on Maharaj's lap. After consoling him a lot, Maharaj said, "Come with me.". With yogic powers Maharaj took him to Girnar mountain, which is the place where great yogis visit for meditation and spiritual pursuits There he met the Nath yogis Machchindranath and Gorakshnath. Pradhan greeted them placing his head on their feet. A little later two dogs appeared followed by Lord Dattatreya, the supreme Guru of all yogis. With all these encounters with spiritual luminaries, Pradhan's grief was considerably lightened. Maharaj then returned him to London.

The surprising part is that next morning, the landlady, while dusting the shoes asked him where he had gone previous day. Pradhan did not understand the question. The landlady then explained that the soil stuck to the shoes was not from England. It appeared to be red soil from India. How did it get there onto your shoes? Pradhan was taken aback. He somehow brushed away the query by asking her not to bother about it. He closed his eyes and re-enjoyed the sweet memories of the visit

to Girnar and the vision of Lord Dattatreya. The vision had impressed him so deeply that he asked an artist to draw the picture of Lord Dattatreya as per his description. Mr Pradhan passed away on November 7th, 1963.

Pradhan's Novels

Mr G. K. Pradhan has written two novels: *Towards the Silver Crests of Himalayas* and *Know Thyself.* The first novel written in his lifetime and published by Bharatiya Vidyabhavan, depicts the life and spiritual progress of Madhav an intelligent student of phiolosophy and later a government official who was drawn to his Guru through a dream. Mr Pradhan has presented teachings of Maharaj through the chara ter of Gurudev, the Guru of Madhav in the novel. The novel is in an autobiographical style written so expertly that many persons actually believe Madhav to be a real life character. The novel has been translated in many languages. The second novel is *Know thyself.* This novel also teaches about the attitudes one must take in life, through the teachings and actions of its main character Swamiji, a sanyasi whom a group of passengers including a Christian priest and a few British persons, meet in the first class compartment of a Delhi-Bombay train. The setting is the year 1913, just before the World war I. Swamiji stresses that the following of a religion should result in inner transformation which frees you from the fear and bonds and which only can make you realise God. Most of the religions as they are practised today with rules and regulations bind you, rather than free you.The interesting thing about this novel is that it has been written posthumously by what is termed as *automatic*

writing. Mr Pradhan passed away on November 7, 1963. One of the disciples of Mr Pradhan was instructed in a dream to search for the manuscript which was ultimately found in the old papers of the company which Mr Pradhan owned in partnership with another disciple Me Asher. Apparently it was written after about 1965 since, though the setting is of 1913, there is a mention of lasers and tapes and cassettes; for the laser was invented in 1958 and was marketed in the sixties while the cassettes came in mid-sixties.

Raosaheb And Taisaheb Mehendale

Raosaheb Balwantrao Mehendale who was a barrister and his wife Taisaheb Mehendale were also close disciples of Maharaj. Raosaheb married Taisaheb (real name Padmavati) after the death of his first wife Akkasaheb. The latter tragedy had devastated his life but one of his friends, Sardar Mirikar of Miri state near Nagar saved him by bringing him to spiritual path, making him attend discourses on Dnyaneshwari by Dadamaharaj Satarkar in Bombay. Sardar Mirikar was a disciple of Maharaj and was instrumental in bringing Raosaheb to him. He at once took him in his fold.

Taisaheb, whom he married later, was also having a disappointed life and even thought of suicide. Due to a strange course of events she was prevented from this drastic step and was taken, rather reluctantly to meet Maharaj who at that time was in bombay. She also came in the fold of Maharaj. Maharaj initiated her by touching her Vishudhdha chakra on the throat with his

ring finger. She immediately went into trance and spontaneously sang the stanzas from Virahini of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj. He later instructed her to give discourses on Dnyaneshwari. Mehendale couple left Bombay and settled in Pune in their ancestral Mehendalewada at the Appa Balwant Chowk in Pune.

In Pune, spiritual programs like discourses, bhajans, kirtans were held in Mehendalewada which became a centre of solace for people who were frustrated in life and needed a relief. These discourses were a spiritual experience to the audience and continued for more than three decades. Mehendalewada was one of the places in Pune where Maharaj visited often. He used to listen to the discourses and kirtans. Sometimes, when the discourse on Dnyaneshwari started, people noticed whitish vapour emanating from Taisaheb's mouth. Whenever this happened, the discourse used to impart deeper bliss to the listeners and they used to feel the meaning of their life being unfolded. It was as if Shri Shankar Maharaj speaking through her, for he had already told that "I myself cannot speak. I need someone intelligent with pure mind". Maharaj attended some of them and also other festivals celebrated in the Mehendalewada. It has been reported by Yogi Dnyananath Ranade and Mr Vasudeo Pandit who were frequent visitors to Mehendalewada that on one Mahashivaratri night the deformed body of Maharaj slowly turned blue and everybody saw before them Lord Shiva in person. Mehendalewada has now been virtually demolished but it was a great centre of spiritual activities three to five decades ago. Yogi philosophers like Maharshi Vinod who was also a friend of the Mehendales, were closely associated with Maharaj. One day, when reference to Lord Shiva was

made during the discourse, Maharaj started performing the Tandav dance of Lord Shiva. Nana Pandit (see later) who used to regularly attend these programmes, actually saw Lord Shiva dancing instead of Maharaj.

The Gokulashtami celebrations continued up to 1972 for thirty-two years. Raosaheb Mehendale passed away in 1958; Taisaheb much later. They are survived by a daughter Kumud who is married and lives with her family whatever is left of the Mehendalewada. Maharaj transformed the life of Mehendale couple and through them gave spiritual solace to many people.

Offered at the feet of my Guru Shri Shankar Maharaj .
ALAKH NIRANJAN

CHAPTER 1

ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY

OBEISANCE

Obeisance to the Supreme Soul who is in the form of AUM and whom only the Vedas can describe. My obeisance to you who is the Self and can only be experienced. Oh God, you are the Ganesha, who enables everybody's intellect to understand everything. Thus says this disciple of Shri Nivruttinath. (1:1-2).

(Dnyaneshwar Maharaj then describes in beautiful poetic style the form of Ganesha the God of Knowledge and remover of all obstacles comparing each part of the

body to some branch of knowledge. He then makes obeisance to Sharada the Goddess of learning and then praises his Guru Nivruttinath ascribing to him the credit for initiating the work and providing strength, enthusiasm and sense of devotion for fulfilling this immense task. He the extols the qualities of the Gita which even great Rishis respectfully read and enjoy. (1:3-84) Now the commentary on the Gita starts. <u>But note that this chapter does not contain any philosophical part and reader may skip it. However please read the notes below the chapter.</u>)

FIRST SHLOKA OF GITA

Overcome by the love for his sons, Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya to describe the situation on the righteous battlefield of Kurukshetra (*See note at the end of chapter*) where his sons and Pandavas have gone to fight each other. (1:85-87)

Sanjaya replied, "The Pandava army is agitated with fury like the waters at the time of the Great Flood. Arranged in many strategic formations it looks horrible. (1:88,91).

But Duryodhana looked at it scornfully and approaching Dronacharya remarked, "look at the various strategic formations of the Pandava army. These have been done by Drishtadumna, son of Drupada whom you taught and made an expert in the military arts. (1:92-95). There are other warriors also in their army of strength and capability comparable those of Bhima and Arjuna. They include the great warrior Yuyudhan, Virat and the great chariot-warrior Drupad. Also come are Chekitan, Dhrishtaketu, Kashiraj, Uttamouja and the great king Shaibya. Abhimanyu

the son of Subhadra looks like younger image of Arjuna. Other sons of Draupadi as well as many other warriors have also come. (1:99-102).

Now I shall mention also the names of the warriors fighting on our side. Here is our granduncle Bhishma with a capability as bright as sun. This brave Karna is like a lion. Then we also have the powerful stalwarts like Kripacharya, Vikarna, Ashwathama, Samitinjaya, Soumadatti and innumerable other warriors. (1:103-108, 109). Besides, Granduncle Bhishma has been appointed the chief of our army. His strength imparts this army the appearance of a fort. Who can face this army? On the other hand the Pandava army is very small but even then it appears huge to me. On top of it that colossus Bhima has become the chief of their army." (1:115-120).

After talking thus to Dronacharya, Duryodhana addressed the rest of the army and calling upon them to arrange themselves in proper formations, to arrange for protection of their own great chariot-borne warriors enjoined them to obey Bhishma. He also asked Dronacharya to protect Bhishma and give him as much respect as they gave himself since the strength of the entire army depended on Bhishma. (1:121-125). Hearing this Bhishma was pleased and gave a battle cry and blew his conch which frightened both the armies. (1:130).

Now listen to the happenings in the Pandava army. (1:137). Shri Krishna whose love for his devotes is out of this world, is acting as Arjuna's charioteer out of love for him. Shri Krishna blew his Panchjanya conch which silenced the war cries of the Kaurava army. This

was followed by the terrible sounds from Arjuna's conch and the conches of the other Pandavas. Other warriors like Drupad, Kashiraj, Arjuna's sons, Satyaki, Dhrishatadyuman, Shikhandi, Virat etc who also blew their conches the sounds from which shook the earth. (1:142-143, 146-153). The disoriented Kaurava army was brought under control by their leaders who began to shower arrows on pandava army. (1:164-165).

Feeling satisfied, Arjuna eagerly glanced at the army and when he saw the Kauravas ready for war he slowly picked up his bow. Then he asked Shri Krishna to take his chariot quickly in the middle of the two armies so that he could observe the great warriors come there to fight. He said, "I must decide with whom I must choose to fight. These Kauravas generally are of evil nature and though they have the eagerness for war they lack courage." (1:167-173). Thus reporting Arjuna's speech to Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya further described,

ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY

Oh King, Shri Krishna brought the chariot in between the two armies where Bhishma, Drona and other kings were waiting. Observing them, Arjuna said, "Shri Krishna, look. These are all our own family members and teachers." Hearing this, Shri Krishna was startled and thought, "What is this that has come in Arjuna's mind?". But he kept quiet. (1:174-179). Arjuna saw his teachers, grand uncle, relatives and friends, sons and grandsons too, Arjuna was shaken and compassion arose in his mind and his warrior nature left him. (1:180-182). He said to Shri Krishna, "I see only our friends and relatives here. They have come here for war but will it be proper for us also to do the same? I

am confused and my bow has fallen from my hands. (1:194-198). If we have to kill the Kauravas then why should we not kill my own brothers too? Both belong to our family. (1:207). It will be improper to fight this war. (1:209). I am not interested in winning the war. What use is enjoying the pleasures after killing these people? (1:210-211). I shall be burdened with the sin of killing my family members. (1:228).". Thus raving, Arjuna said that he was not going to touch any weapon in this war because he found it improper. (1:233). The body for the pleasures of which one wished for the kingdom, was itself short-lived. When we know this why should we not loathe it? (1:263). Overcome with grief Arjuna jumped from the chariot and threw his bow and arrows on the ground. Uncontrollable tears started flowing from his eyes. (1:268, 272).

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says, "Listen in the next chapter how Shri Krishna advises a grief stricken Arjuna on the meaning of spiritual goal." (1:274).

NOTES

Note 1 What is given in this chapter is a summary of the first chapter of Dnyaneshwari which, as in the Gita, describes the situation on the opening day of the Mahabharata war between the Kauravas and Pandavas on the battlefield of Kurukshetra (near modern Delhi). Dhritarashtra being blind had requested Shri Krishna to fulfil his wish to get the news about the progress of the war sitting at home. Shri Krishna in the role of Bhagwan or God (*See below*) has empowered Dhritarashtra's charioteer by a Divine sight which enables him to see the battlefield scenario and describe

it to the blind king. The Gita itself starts with instruction given by Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya to describe the battlefield scene on the opening day. (see Mahabharata War).

Shri Krishna as Bhagwan The Gita or Bhagvadgita, on which Dnyaneshwari has been written as a commentary by Saint Dnyaneshwar, is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna. In Mahabharata of which Gita is a part, Shri Krishna is presented in the role of Bhagwan or almighty God in incarnate form. As readers would have concluded from the Prologue, the dialogue in the Gita is not factual but a composition by added by Sauti to the Mahabharata. During the lifetime of Shri Krishna he was not considered as a god or an incarnation of Vishnu. He was considered so only many centuries later, but before Sauti's time (450 BC). Thus, it is natural that the additions made by Suta and Sauti to Mahabharata refer to him as Bhagwan or God. Not only that, it is also suggested that people living at that time knew him as an incarnation. This has given rise to irrational situations in the episodes in the Epic. Having assigned the role of an avatar to Shri Krishna, he is mentioned in Gita and Dnyaneshwari as Bhagwan (God). In fact much of the advice to Arjuna is rendered by Shri Krishna in this role of Bhagwan which Arjuna also recognises.

Note 2 Both Shri Krishna and Arjuna are mentioned by various names in the Bhagvadgita, but we shall maintain the names Shri Krishna and Arjuna in this translation for the sake of convenience.

Note 3 Use of the term YOGA The term Yoga is used with different implied meanings in the Gita.

Sometimes this can be very confusing. For example, title of each chapter is described as a yoga. Thus the first chapter is named "Arjuna-Vishada-yoga" which literally means "Yoga of Arjuna's despondency". (In this translation the term yoga has been omitted from the titles as far as possible). The term Yoga is derived from the root yuj which means "to harness or to yoke". It is also used to mean to join or to unite. It has also been used to mean concentrate mind and intellect. Thus Yoga would imply combining i.e. uniting the actions of the body and of the mind (meditation, attitude etc.) to attain a goal which to spiritual seekers is the Self-realisation. It is often used to mean union of the individual soul or consciousness with the Cosmic spirit or Brahman through the process of meditation. In the Gita the term Yoga is used more liberally to mean a system of approach towards liberation or Self-realisation which is the same as the union with the Brahman. This is how the terms Jnyanayoga (or Yoga of Knowledge) and Karmayoga (or Yoga of Action) have been used. Reader should understand the implied meaning from the context to avoid confusion.

Popularly, the term Yoga is used for Hathayoga which is a system of control of the body through certain body postures together with Pranayama or breath control. However there are many other systems of Yoga techniques in which one meditates sitting in a single posture of sitting in Padmasana (or lotus posture) or Sahajasana (or easy posture also known as half-lotus posture), concentrating on a point in between the eybrows and sometimes on breath, as prescribed by one's teacher (see Ch 6)

CHAPTER 2

THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

SHRI KRISHNA CONSOLES ARJUNA

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, first think whether this kind of talk and behaviour on the battlefield becomes you. Realise who you are and what you are doing. (2:6). What has come over you? What is it you are feeling sorry about? It is not like you to bother about irrelevant matters and to give up courage. (2:7-8). You who are famous for unqualified bravery are crying! (2:11). Do not let your mind be overcome by weakness. Gather your courage and come to your senses. Leave this foolishness, get up and take your bow and arrow. What use is compassion on the battlefield? You are an intelligent person. Then why don't you realise that compassion during a battle is of no use? It will only harm your name and make you lose the benefits in the world beyond. (2:17-20). This kind of compassion is of no use during the time of war. Is it only now that you have realised that Kauravas are your relatives? Did you not know that earlier? Is this dispute a new thing in your life? It has been an usual affair between you and the Kauravas. (2:23-25). Due to this delusion you will lose the standing you have gained so far and not only will you lose everything in this world

but in the next as well. A true warrior should keep away from the weakness of heart, because for a Kshatriya it is his downfall." (2:27-28).

Arjuna however repeated his pleas saying that he could not be so ungrateful as to fight with and kill his own teacher (i.e. Dronacharya) to whom he owed all his battle skills and who was like a father to him and therefore fit to be worshipped. Finally, when he realised that Shri Krishna was not listening to his pleas, he said he felt confused and prayed to Shri Krishna for proper advice consistent with Dharma (code of righteous conduct) adding that Shri Krishna was like his teacher, brother, parents, family deity and saviour. (2:30-68).

BIRTH DEATH CYCLES ARE NATURAL

Shri Krishna then said, "Arjuna, I am really surprised at what you are doing. You call yourself knowledgeable but do not let go of your ignorance. And when I try to teach you something you lecture on ethics. (2:91-92). "Tell me, is this universe sustained only because of you? What people say about the universe that it has been existing from time immemorial must then be false. Is what everybody says about the creation that "All creatures are created by the one and only God" all wrong? Has the situation now become such that what is born is created by you and what has died has been killed by you? And that the Kauravas will be destroyed only if you wish it so? Or that, if because of your ego you decide not to kill them, they will remain

immortal? Perhaps there is delusion in your mind that people die because you are the one who causes death? Arjuna, birth and death are things established from time immemorial and are natural occurrences, then why should you feel sorry for them for no reason? (2:94-100). Arjuna, persons of discrimination know that both birth and death are delusions and do not lament either of them. (2:102). The feeling that "this is born" or "that has died" is created because of *Maya*, otherwise the basic underlying principle which is Brahman is indestructible. (See the note at the end of chapter). Wind causes ripples on water which takes wavy shape and when wind dies water becomes flat, then what was created and what got destroyed? (2:105-107).

Consider the obvious example of the body. Changes occur with age in the same body. First there is childhood in the body. It goes and youth comes but when one state goes and the other comes the body itself is not destroyed. In the same way changes in an individual life occur, the difference in this case being that one body goes and is replaced by another, but the Consciousness (soul) does not get destroyed. He who understands this does not suffer grief due to the delusion of life and death. (2:108-110).

SENSE PLEASURE CAUSE OF DELUSION

The reason why people do not realise this is that man is a slave to the senses. His mind, being caught in sensual pleasures, leads to the delusive feelings of happiness and sorrow. Enjoyment of

sense pleasures leads to feelings of happiness and sorrow and creates attachment to the sense objects. There is nothing steady about sense objects. Sometimes they give pleasure and sometimes pain. For example, praise gives pleasure while criticism creates unpleasantness; hard objects are unpleasant, soft objects give pleasure, etc. (2:111-114). This leads to the ignorance about the true nature of the Self in this life. (2:118).

People get trapped by the sense organs (Note: The five sense organs are: Eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin) and when they experience the feelings like hot and cold etc., they get subjected to the feelings of pleasure and pain.. Nature of the sense organs is such that it makes them feel there is nothing better than sensual pleasures of the body and mind. And these sense objects are impermanent like a mirage. Therefore you should not keep their company. (2:119-122).

Pleasure and pain do not touch a person who is not influenced by these sense objects, nor has he to go through rebirth. Keep in mind that he who is not trapped by the sense objects is totally indestructible. (2:123-124).

ULTIMATE PRINCIPLE - THE *BRAHMAN*

Arjuna, I am going to tell you about one more thing which sensible people realise. In this world which pervaded by *Maya*, there is a mysterious principle about which all philosophers agree. (2:125-126). When a man of Knowledge ponders over what is universe etc., matters related to the

material world get eliminated and what remains for him to think about is only that principle which is the Self (or soul). Having come to a definite conclusion about what is truth and what is untruth, he is oblivious to an impermanent thing like the body. Careful thinking leads to a conclusion that whatever is impermanent and delusive is inconsequential and what is permanent is fundamental. He who created this universe is devoid of attributes like colour or form. He is all-pervading and beyond birth and death. He cannot be destroyed even if you want to. On the other hand, bodies are naturally perishable, therefore it is proper that you should fight. It is not you who is their destroyer and they also are not destructible only by you. If you think otherwise then that is because of your ignorance. (2:131-138).

Things seen during a dream appear real while the dream lasts but once we wake up we realise that they were not real. You are only experiencing a similar illusion due to the effect of *Maya*. (2:139-140).

SOUL IS IMMORTAL

Even if the body dies, the Soul (*Atman*) does not die. Therefore do not extend your impression about the death of the body to the Soul. (2:141). Just as a person discards his old clothes and wears new ones, similarly the Soul, the master of the Consciousness discards one body and occupies another.

This Soul is without birth, is permanent, eternal, pure and without form. It cannot be cut by

weapons, cannot get drowned even in flood waters, fire cannot burn it and wind cannot suck it. This constant and eternal Soul totally pervades everything. It cannot be understood by reasoning but can be experienced only through meditation. This infinite supreme entity is inaccessible to the mind and is unobtainable through implements or techniques. It is the unbounded and superior to all living and nonliving things. It is without the three attributes (*Sattva*, the attribute of purity, goodness, knowledge etc.; *Raja*, the attribute of that of movement, desire, passion etc.; and *Tama* that of lethargy, darkness, ignorance etc.), timeless, beyond shape and form and all encompassing. Arjuna, if you are able to realise this Soul which exists inside everybody then all your sorrows will disappear. (2:144-151).

And even if you were to consider the Soul to be destructible there is no reason for you to feel sorry, because the cycle of creation, existence and dissolution continues perpetually like the flow of the Ganges. (2:152-153). These three states which are applicable to all living beings, are all same to the Soul. Your sorrow in this context is therefore improper because this natural cycle has been going on since time immemorial. (2:155-156). Birth and death are inevitable. (2:158).

WHAT IS BORN DIES AND IS REBORN

Whatever is born perishes and is later born again. This wheel of life and death has been going on perpetually from time immemorial like the cycle of sunrise and sunset. At the time of the big

deluge these three worlds also get destroyed. Therefore beginning and end are inevitable. (2:159-161).

Prior to birth creatures have no form. They acquire it after birth. When they die they certainly will not reach another state but only the previous. **The form you see between the birth and the death is the projection (an illusive image) of Brahman due to the influence of Maya.** (2:164-166). All creatures acquire a form due to the effect of *Maya*, therefore why should you shed tears over something which does not exist in the first place? Instead, you should think about the eternal Soul (*Atman*). (2:168-169).

Those who develop a love for this Soul (*Atman*) are not influenced by sense-objects. They become detached and dispassionate and live a hermit's life. With the *Atman* as their goal they observe constraints like celibacy and penance. (2:170-171). Many have attained a state of steadiness of mind and by concentrating on that pure Self, have lost all thoughts about the material world. Many have developed detachment and become constantly engrossed with it (i.e. the Self) while singing its praises. Some have left their "*I am the body*" feeling while some have become one with it (The Self). Just as the river flow merging into the ocean does not revert, similarly superior yogis, once their intellect merges with the Soul become one with it and they are not reborn. (2:172-176). The all-pervading *Brahman* exists within everybody. It cannot be destroyed even if you want to. It is the cause of birth and death of

every creature therefore why should you feel sorry? (2:177-178).

DHARMA- THE RIGHTEOUS CODE OF CONDUCT

Have you forgotten your *Dharma* (Code of righteous conduct or duty) which guides one through one's life? (2:180). *Swadharma* (i.e. your own *Dharma* or *Dharma* applicable to oneself) is never to be given up whatever may happen to the Kauravas or to you. If you forsake your own *Dharma* (i.e. that of a *Kshatriya* or warrior) and show be compassion, will that compassion save you? This fountain of kindness is inappropriate during a war. (2:182-183). Self-interest is harmed if one does wrong things at the wrong time. Therefore come to your senses in time and attend to your *Swadharma*. Behaving as prescribed by *Swadharma* never leads to any blemish. (2:185-186). All desires get fulfilled if you follow *Swadharma*. For you Kshatriyas (warrior caste) there is nothing more proper than fighting. (2:188-189). Such opportunities of war come to Kshatriyas as a result of a lot of merit. (2:194). If you avoid this war and grieve over wrong things then it is as good as self-destruction. (2:196). If you forsake *Swadharma* then you will be burdened with sin and the blemish of failure will never be erased for ages. (2:201).

And how are you going to leave this battlefield? Your enemies will not understand that you are giving up the enmity out of out of a clean and kind heart. They will surround you and shower

you with arrows and then your kindness will be of no help to you in escaping. Even if you do escape and survive, living that life will be worse than death. (2:202-205).

You have gained an exceptional fame (2:211) and these Kauravas are afraid of you. (2:215) That fear will not remain if you retreat. (2:217). And even if you want to run away they will not let you. They will catch you and put you to a ridicule. Instead of hearing all that slander and feel broken-hearted, why should you not defeat them by fighting bravely and then enjoy the throne? And even if you were to die fighting then you will naturally attain the kingdom of heaven (which is due to those warriors who die fighting). Therefore do not waste your time in thinking, pick up your bow and arrow and be ready for war. (2:218-221)

Practice of *Swadharma* removes all past blemishes. Why should you then have an apprehension that you are going to commit sin? (2:222). It would be a sin only if you act with the desire of fruits in mind even if the act itself was as prescribed according to *Swadharma*. If you fight as a *Kshatriya* with a desireless attitude towards the fruits then there is no sin involved. (2:224-225)

Equanimity Towards Happiness And Sorrow

One should not feel ecstasy by happiness nor feel aggrieved by sorrow. Neither should one think about gains and losses. One should not keep thinking in advance about whether one would win

or die in this war. One should quietly accept whatever comes to his lot while acting according to Swadharma. Actions performed with this attitude do not lead to any blemish, therefore Arjuna go and fight with determination. (2:226-229)

YOGA OF INTELLECT (*BUDDHIYOGA*)

What I have told you so far is the Yoga of Knowledge of the *Sankhya* philosophy. Now I shall tell you the Yoga of intellect (of *Karmayogis i.e. followers of the path of action*). (2:230) By following this yoga of intellect you do not miss the worldly pleasures and at the same time you are also assured of liberation. As mentioned earlier in connection with *Swadharma*, one should perform one's duties but without bothering about the fruits of his actions. He who is endowed with this attitude of performing his duties without the desire of the fruits thereof becomes immediately free of all encumbrances (of birth and death). (2:233-235).

An intellect which is not touched by the thoughts of sin or merit (i.e. desireless intellect, because it is the desire that leads to worry about sin and merit.), which is extremely subtle and steady and not stained by the three attributes *Sattva, Raja* and *Tama*, destroys the fear of the material world if it illuminates the mind even slightly, by virtue of the merit of earlier births. (2:236-237)

Righteous and base intellects Even if this righteous intellect were to be present only slightly, it should not be considered as

unimportant. This righteous intellect which leads one towards God, is very rare. (2:238-239). This unique righteous intellect in the world has no other goal than attainment of God. All other types of intellect are corrupted intellects which are affected by passions and in which persons without discrimination get enraptured. Therefore Arjuna, such persons without discrimination may attain heaven, earth or hell but never the bliss of the Self. (2:241-244).

These persons establish the greatness of Vedic rituals quoting the Vedas in support, but perform them with the desire of fruits in mind. They say that one should be born on this earth, perform the rituals like yajna and then enjoy the consequent pleasures of heaven. (2:245-246). They perform all the rituals rigorously as prescribed but they do one unfortunate thing. By keeping the goal of pleasures as heaven they forget the very God in whose name they conduct the rituals. (2:249-250). Like cooking excellent food and then selling it for money, they sell the Dharma for the benefit of pleasure. Therefore I say that people who spend their time in debating on the meaning of the Vedas shelter a corrupted intellect. (2:254-255).

Attributes of the Veda constituents Vedas (which comprise of *Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*) are definitely associated with the three attributes *Sattva, Raja* and *Tama*. *Upanishads* and other philosophical works should be considered as having the *Sattva* attribute. The rest, which discuss rituals and other exercises for

attainment of heaven have the *Raja* and the *Tama* attributes. Therefore they are the cause of pleasure and sorrow and you should not harbour them in your mind. Discard these three attributes, do not speak of "I" and "mine" and keep the bliss of the Self-realisation firmly in your mind. (2:256-259).

Though Vedas tell many things and suggest many rituals, you should choose only that which is beneficial for you. After deep thinking I came to the conclusion that it is proper for you to avoid evil deeds and perform actions as prescribed in the *Shastras* (scriptures) but without the desire for fruits thereof. Do your duty as per your own *Dharma* with a desireless attitude. (2:260-266). But when you are fortunate enough to have achieved success, do not get exhilarated by it nor feel sorry if for some reason you are not successful. If whatever work which was undertaken reaches completion then it is fine but if it does not, then also it is all right. (2:268-269). Whatever work we do, when its offering is made to God, then automatically it becomes complete. (2:271). **A balanced attitude of mind towards both successful and unsuccessful actions is hailed as the best state of Yoga. Equanimity of mind, where mind and intellect work together, is the essence of yoga**. (2:272-273).

PATH OF ACTIONS OR *KARMAYOGA*

Considering everything, the path of actions appears to be of lesser status in comparison with the yoga of intellect. Actually, one achieves

success in the yoga of intellect only when the actions are performed with desireless attitude, because negation of the actions (by offering them to God) leads naturally to the state of yoga. Therefore Arjuna, steady your mind with the help of this yoga of intellect, giving up the desire of fruits of your actions. Those who followed this yoga of intellect transcended this material world and were liberated from the entanglement into sin and merit. Such people, even though they do perform their duties, they reject the fruits thereof and therefore are freed from the birth and death cycles and reach the eternal state of bliss. Arjuna, you will become like that when you give up your delusion and your mind becomes dispassionate. Then the very pure mystical Knowledge will rise within you and your mind will automatically become dispassionate. In this state, the thoughts of gaining more knowledge or remembering whatever was learnt in the past do not arise. Then the intellect (mind?) which was wandering due to the influence of sense-organs will easily become steady in the Supreme Soul. When the intellect becomes steady, you will reach a state of Samadhi, the steady quiet bliss and only then you will attain the state of yoga. (2:274-284).

[NOTE: *This should have been sufficient to make Arjuna come to his senses and fight. But Sauti wanted to present the synthesis of the then current philosophies of liberation paths. All the rest of the Gita seems to have been composed towards this object.*]

STABLE INSIGHT AND STABLE INTELLECT

Arjuna then asked, "Shri Krishna, who should be called a person of stable insight (*Sthitapradnya*) and how to recognise him. Also, what are the characteristics of a person who may be called a person of stable intellect (*Sthirabuddhi*)? And how to recognise a person who perpetually enjoys the state of *Samadhi*? In what state does he remain and what does he look like? (2:287-289). (Note: Samadhi is a deep state of trance without thoughts.)

Shri Krishna replied, "The strong desire carried in the mind for sense pleasures is what comes in the way of the bliss of the Self. He who is always contented and whose desire for sense pleasures which is the cause of the downfall of persons, has left him for good and who is always immersed in the bliss of the Self should be considered as a person of **stable insight** (*Sthitapradnya*). (2:291-293).

Desire and anger vanish naturally from the mind of a person who remains unperturbed even when faced with all types of distress and who is not led astray by the lure of pleasure. Having reached a state of perfection he is totally free of fear. Freed of these restraints he has reached oneness with the Brahman. Such a person should be considered as a person of **stable intellect**. (2:294-296).

Such person always behaves with impartial attitude towards all. This nature of his having constant equanimity and compassion towards all

creatures never changes. He is never enthralled by happiness from good things nor disheartened by sorrow from the bad. **He who, being bereft of feelings of happiness and sorrow, remains absorbed in the Supreme Self should be considered as a person of stable insight** (*Sthitapradnya*). **And he who is in complete control of his sense organs, should be considered as a person of stable intellect**. (2:299-300).

CONTROLLING SENSE ORGANS

And Arjuna, I shall tell you an interesting thing. Seekers practice restraint and give up sense-pleasures; but they too can get entangled in various types of sense-pleasures if while restraining the ears, eyes etc., they fail to restrain the tongue. (2:303-304). One can restrain himself from all sense-pleasures except that of the tongue. One cannot forcibly restrain the pleasure of the tongue because our life depends on food. But when a seeker attains Self-realisation, the tongue naturally gets controlled and since the "*I am the body*" feeling has left him he forgets all sense-pleasures. (2:307-309).

These organs cannot be brought under control by any other means. (NB: It is implied that external means like rituals, fasts etc. are not useful. Internal means like meditation only are useful for the purpose). Because even those who constantly try to conquer them and keep their minds under control by observing strict rules and restrictions, are harassed by them. Such is the power of these

organs! Even in the case of yogis, the sense objects appear in the form of *Riddhi-Siddhis* (Occult powers) gained by them and rule their minds through the organs. If a yogi is caught in their clutches then he deviates from his study of yoga, such is the strength of the organs. (2:311-314).

Therefore Arjuna, he who leaves all desire of pleasures, controls his organs and is not allured by the sense-pleasures is alone worthy of the trust set by yoga i.e. steadiness of intellect. Such a person has the knowledge of the Self and never forgets me. (2:315-317). [Note: Shri Krishna presents himself henceforth as Supreme Soul].

On the other hand, he who outwardly gives up sense-objects but keeps on thinking about them must be considered as being entangled only in the materialistic world. (2:318). A slightest trace of desires remaining in the mind destroys discretion. (2:320). Mere memory of these sense-pleasures creates desire for them in the mind of even a detached person. Passions then arise in the mind and where there is passion there is also anger. Anger leads to thoughtlessness. Thoughtlessness leads to loss of memory and then the intellect is engulfed by the darkness of ignorance. The intellect then suffers and loses direction. Thus, the loss of memory leads to confused intellect and this in turn destroys all knowledge. In this way, even occasional memory of the sense-pleasures can lead to such downfall. Therefore, when these sense-pleasures are totally removed from the mind, anger and hate are automatically destroyed.

When anger and hate are destroyed then even if the organs become engaged in the sense-pleasures they do no harm. (2:321-332). Such a person is detached towards sense-objects, free of desire and anger and remains engrossed in the bliss of the Self. (2:334). He who thus remains absorbed in the Self may be considered without doubt to have a stable intellect.

Be Cheerful Worldly sorrows do not enter a cheerful mind. (2:338). How can a person feel unhappy when his heart is cheerful? The mind of such a person remains naturally focused on God. Like a flame in windless air, that person with stable intellect achieves the yogic state and becomes united with Brahman. (2:339-341).

A person in whose mind the thoughts of this yoga do not take root, gets entangled in the trap of sense objects. The intellect of such person is never stable nor does he desire it to be stable. If there is no feeling of stability in the mind then how can he achieve peace? Just as a sinner cannot attain liberation, similarly where there is no love for peace there is no happiness either, even by chance. (2:342-345). Therefore instability of mind is the cause for sorrow and therefore it is best to control the sense-organs. (2:347).

Persons who submit to the demands of the sense-organs do not really transcend the material world, though outwardly it may appear to be so. (2:348). Even a person who has attained Self-realisation, is trapped in the sorrowful consequences of the

material world if he pampers the sense organs. Therefore what better achievement is there than conquering the sense-organs? (2:350-351). He whose sense-organs obey his commands may be considered has having a stable insight. Now listen to another characteristic of such a person who has reached perfection. (2:353-354).

YOGI IS ALWAYS AWAKE

When all creatures are in a state of sleep regarding *Brahman* he is ever awake to it and he shuts his eyes at the (material) things for which everybody else struggles. Such a person should be recognised as a great sage free of attachments. (2:355-356). He is not bothered about whether or not he has achieved the *Riddhi-Siddhis* (Occult powers). (2:360). Satiated with Self-realisation, he remains in the state of bliss of the Self and goes about in this world in that state, bereft of ego and all desires. Recognise him truly as a person with stable insight. (2:366-367). This is what is called the extreme state of the Brahman experienced by the dispassionate people who effortlessly become one with it. Once they become one with Brahman then there is no question of their mind suffering and becoming an impediment in the way of reaching the state of the Brahman at the time of physical death. (2:368-369).

Note on ***Brahman, Atman, Soul*** and ***Self*** (2:105-107) To explain creation of material world with attributes by an attributeless entity like *Brahman*, existence of *Maya* which holds the power of the

Brahman to create the materialistic world is postulated. Other parallel philosophies postulate the same as *Shakti* of *Shiva* or *Prakriti* associated with *Purusha*.)

Brahman is the ultimate principle of the universe which pervades everything, is infinite, formless, attributeless and imperishable. It creates the world through its projection *Maya*. When an individual is created it has a soul which is same as the *Brahman*. At birth the individual acquires a body which is shed on death but the soul does not die. It acquires another body after some time i.e. is reborn as another creature or person. Individual undergoes millions of life cycles like this. During the period between the birth and death, the individual, due to effects of *Maya* is not aware that he is really the Soul but gives almost full attention to pleasures of the body. In other words he thinks that his Self is his body while actually it is his Soul. Self-realisation is the realisation that one is really the soul and not the body. Thus, *Brahman*, *Atman*, Soul and the Self may be used synonymously depending upon the context.

Note on ***Attributes*** (2:144-151). All worldly objects, entities or actions are supposed to have three attributes in different proportions. The attributes are

Sattva, the attribute of purity, goodness, knowledge etc.;

Raja, the attribute of movement, desire, passion etc.; and

Tama the attribute of lethargy, darkness,

ignorance etc.
Attributes are discussed in detail in Chapters 14, 16 and 18.

CHAPTER 3

PATH OF ACTIONS

ARJUNA IS CONFUSED

At this stage Arjuna asked why, if Shri Krishna was against actions he was asking him to fight. (3:3)

JNANAYOGA AND *KARMAYOGA* - BOTH HAVE COMMON GOAL

Shri Krishna said, "While I was telling you about the *Buddhiyoga*, naturally I also told you about *Sankhya* philosophy. But both have been only expounded by me from time immemorial. Through the practice of **Jnyanayoga** (the Yoga of Knowledge) of the *Sankhyas* a seeker attains Self-realisation and becomes one with me immediately. **Karmayoga** (Yoga of Action) is a slow-speed path in which a seeker diligently practices actions according to *Swadharma* and attains liberation at an appropriate time. (Saint Dnyaneshwar compares these two aspects to a fruit on a tree which a bird (*Jnanayogi* i.e. a follower of *Jnanayoga*) can fly and eat directly while a human being (Karmayogi i.e. a

follower of Karmayoga) has to laboriously climb the tree, branch after branch, to get at it). Both paths, though outwardly different, lead to the same result. But which path to follow depends upon the capability of the seeker. (3:33-44)

IMPORTANCE OF ACTIONS

Abandoning action is not non-action If without doing the prescribed actions first one says that "I am abandoning actions like a Siddha", then that will not at all constitute non-action for him. Because it is foolish to think that non-action is the same thing as not doing the duties that have fallen to one's lot. (3:45- 46). As long as one is in his body and has desires, actions cannot be abandoned; certain natural duties (like earning livelihood, preparation of food, having progeny etc.) have perforce to be performed. But the actions become non-actions when one is ceaselessly content. Therefore one who wants to achieve non-action should never give up the prescribed actions. (3:47- 50)

It is Maya which controls the material universe. (See the note at the end of Ch 2). Therefore, to say that 'I shall do this and not do that' is ignorance. Even if one stops doing one's duties, the organs have to continue with their own natural duties. (3:53- 54). Then what is it that one is giving up? (3:58) Therefore, a person under the control of nature or Maya cannot give up actions. (3:63)

Some may try to attain the state of non-action by giving up prescribed duties and by controlling the tendencies of their senses. But as long as thoughts about actions continue to occupy their minds they cannot be said to have achieved non-action even though outwardly they

may hypocritically pretend to have abandoned actions. Such persons must be without doubt considered to be engrossed in sense-objects. (3:64- 66).

A DESIRELESS PERSON

In this context listen to the characteristics of a desireless person. (3:67). Such a person though outwardly he may behave like others, is internally steady, always absorbed in the meditation on the Supreme Self. Since he is in control of his sense-organs he is not afraid of sense-objects and nor does he avoid his duties. While he lets his action-organs do their task he is not affected by the resultant feelings. He is not influenced by delusion or by lust. Since outwardly he behaves like others, one cannot know his inner state. Such a person may be considered as liberated. Such a liberated person should be specifically called a yogi. Therefore Arjuna, be such a yogi and let your mind be quiet and free, and let the action organs do their duties. (3:68- 76).

PERFORMING PRESCRIBED DUTIES IS A CEASELESS YAJNA

One cannot abandon worldly duties. Then why should one indulge in doing prohibited actions? Actions performed with desireless attitude lead to liberation. Actions performed by a person according his caste as per the directions laid down for the four caste system lead to his liberation. (3:77- 78).

Performance of the duties as laid down by Swadharma is equivalent to performing a ceaseless Yajna and does not allow sins to enter the mind. One who leaves

Swadharma and prefers improper actions gets bound to the worldly birth and death cycles. (3:81-82).

BRAHMADEO'S ADVICE

Shri Krishna then told Arjuna the following old legend:

When Brahmadeo created this world, he created at the same time both humans and the code of behaviour or actions (*Dharma*) for them. But the code was subtle and men could not understand it. So they asked Brahmadeo,

"On what basis do we exist here?" (3:86-87).

Act as per the code Brahmadeo replied, "I have already set the code of actions depending upon your caste. Let your actions be guided by it and your wishes will be fulfilled with ease. Do not trouble your body by performing *Vratas* (observance of austerities like fast sometimes with rituals) and penances. Do not go far away for pilgrimage. Do not observe yoga and similar techniques, penance with desire or mantra and tantra techniques. Do not worship other deities. Perform the natural yajna of doing actions as per the code (*Dharma*) and the actions will become successful. If you worship the deities by performing actions as per the code then the deities will be pleased and give you the desired objects and will sustain you. You will enjoy the good things of life and be happy." (3:88-95).
When you worship the deities by doing actions as prescribed by *Swadharma*, the deities will be pleased with you and there will develop a mutual love between both of you. (3:96-97).

Violators of code shall be punished And Brahmadeo also warned that, "But if any person, after thus gaining

wealth becomes lusty and behaves by the tendencies of the sense objects and will not use the wealth given to him by the deities to worship God, will not give offerings to Fire and donate food, will not show devotion to the Guru, will not welcome the guests and will not satisfy his community, such a person will face many calamities, lose his wealth and will not be able to enjoy it. (3:103-108). He who forsakes his code loses his liberty. Fate punishes him considering him a thief and snatches everything from him. (3:111-112). Even if he asks for mercy he is not set free up to the end of time. (3:115). Therefore one should always be alert and follow one's code." (3:118)

Utilisation of Wealth Brahmadeo further said, "He who, with desireless mind spends his wealth for the duties prescribed by *Swadharma*, worships his Guru, well-wishers and Fire, and after performing Shraddha of forefathers (ritual of offering of food etc. to the dead forefathers) and other yajna rituals through the hands of brahmins, partakes of the remaining food along with his family, gets his sins washed and becomes free of all blemishes. (3:119-123). Therefore wealth earned by actions according to *Swadharma* should be spent according to *Swadharma* and whatever remains should be enjoyed with satisfaction. (3:124-125)."

Food a form of Brahman Shri Krishna continued, "But those sinners who, by considering themselves to be only the body and not the soul, do not see the sense-objects as anything other than means of enjoyment and who instead of considering the earned wealth as the material for yajna, use it selfishly for their own pleasures, (for example) prepare tasty food and

consume it themselves, actually consume sin. (3:125-129).

All wealth is a means of yajna in the form of *Swadharma*-based actions and should thus be offered to God. Instead, these fools prepare various types of food for themselves. The food which fulfils a yajna is no ordinary thing. It is actually a form of Brahman because life of all creatures depends upon it. (3:130-133).

Creatures grow by food, food grows by rain, rain falls because of *yajna* and *yajna* is performed by actions which are prescribed in the *Vedas* which have originated from the indestructible Brahman. Therefore the Brahman pervades all the living and non-living objects. Thus, the basis of the yajna performed by actions are the immortal *Vedas*. Thus, *Vedas* permanently reside in the prescribed actions. Thus I have told you in short the background of the yajna as part of *Swadharma*. (3:134-138).

Therefore, a proud arrogant person who does not behave properly as per *Swadharma* and instead by evil deeds spends time in physical pleasures is a sinner and burden to this earth. His life and works being fruitless are wasted. (3:139-141).
Duties accompany the body at birth. Duties naturally come with the body i.e. as soon as a person is born, therefore why should one avoid proper actions? Those who avoid the duties even after attaining the human body are ignorant. (3:141-144).

But he who is always engrossed in the Self does not get bound by the actions even while going about doing his duty because he is satiated with the knowledge of the Self and with that he has finished the duties of this

lifetime. Therefore he does not get loaded by his actions. (3:146-147).

Just as the means of satisfaction become irrelevant when one becomes satisfied, the desireless actions according to *Swadharma* are relevant only until one attains the knowledge of the Self. (3:148-149)

Therefore Arjuna, you should control your organs, leave selfish desires, and follow what is prescribed by Swadharma. Those who follow *Swadharma* with desireless attitude attain Brahman in this world. (3:150-151).

ACTIONS AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS

There is another advantage gained by performing prescribed actions. When we do our duties, others note and follow and thereby they are saved from pitfalls. Particularly those who have attained Self-realisation and reached a perfectly desireless state should perform duties for the guidance of others even after Self-realisation. (3:153-155). If a man of knowledge does not teach others by his actions then how will the ignorant understand and take to good path? It is natural for ordinary people emulate the actions of the big, thinking them to be the prescribed actions. Therefore one should not abandon one's duties. Especially the saints and similar persons must perform their duties. (3:157-159).

Even God has to set example by actions Why talk of others? Even I follow this path of actions. I do so not because I am in difficulty or desire something. You are aware that there is nobody in this world who has reached more perfection than I have. (3:160-162). I

carry out prescribed duties in such a way that people get the impression that I do them out of some desire. But I do the duties only because all creatures are dependent on me and they should not behave wantonly. (3:164-165).

If I were to remain engrossed in the Self after reaching perfection, how would people cope up with life? If people emulate me in that condition the entire world will stop functioning. Therefore particularly a capable person who has attained knowledge should not abandon actions. (3:166-168). A desireless person must attend to actions with the same readiness as one with desire but without posing as somebody special. I am telling this to you repeatedly because it is essential that society be protected in every way and one should never show that he is different from the others. (3:169-171)

JNANAYOGA NOT TO BE TOLD TO THE UNFIT

Never sing even by mistake, praises of the path of non-action to a person who is fit only for path of action. Such a person should be told the importance of proper actions and guided towards performance of good actions by setting him an example by own behaviour. If one performs actions for protecting the society such actions do not bind him against liberation. In this way even persons of knowledge perform good deeds with desireless and dispassionate attitude for serving people. (3:173-176)

One should not also tell about this profound spiritual path to an ignorant person who, ignoring the fact that all actions are caused by Maya (or nature_ thinks, because of the ego and narrow thinking, that he is the

doer. (3:178-179).
Maya, the creator of all actions is absent in a person who has realised Self. Such persons give up the I-am-the-body ego, understand the unique relation between the attributes and actions and remain in the body with uninvolved attitude. Therefore even by remaining in the body, the actions do not touch them. (3:181-183). A person who is under the influence of the attributes and acts under the control of Maya is alone affected by actions. Because organs, with the help of the attributes behave according to their own nature but he claims the credit for their actions. (3:184-185).

Therefore Arjuna, you perform all the prescribed actions and make their offering to me but concentrate your attention on the Self. Do not harbour an ego like "This is the action, I am its doer and I am going to do it." Do not go after this body, shed all desires and enjoy or endure whatever comes to your lot. (3:186-188).
Those who accept with respect this firm opinion of mine and behave according to it with faith will be free from the binding of their actions. (3:192-193).
A wise person should never pamper the organs. (3:202).
When the body is controlled by others why should one accumulate the fruits of actions for it. (3:205).
Ordinarily, mind experiences pleasure when the organs are provided with the sense-objects. But just as the company of a robber is safe for a short time, only up to the village boundary, the lust residing in the organs leads them to depravity. (3:210-211, 213). The desire for sense-pleasures causes anger and destroys the intellect. Desire and anger are both extremely dangerous; therefore shed their company. Do not let the nectar of experience of the Self be spoilt by even the thought of desire and anger. (3:215-218).

IMPORTANCE OF DHARMA

It is advantageous to practice one's own *Dharma*, however difficult, rather than that of others even if the latter may appear attractive. (3:219-220). Would one demolish one's own thatched hut by comparing it to the white mansions of others? (3:223). Similarly, even if one's *Dharma* is painful and difficult to practice, it is that which makes his afterlife happy. (3:225). Therefore by taking into account his own benefit, one should not do actions which may befit others but not to himself. Even if one has to sacrifice one's life while practising *Swadharma* it is good because it will establish one's greatness in both the worlds. (3: 228-229).

ARJUNA'S QUESTION

At this point Arjuna asked, "Who are responsible for making even persons of Knowledge distort their thinking and go astray?" He also asked other questions broadly in the same vein. (3:232-238)

DESIRE AND ANGER OBSTRUCT LIBERATION

Shri Krishna replied, "Desire and anger dwelling in a person's mind are the two merciless culprits who are responsible for it. They keep people away from Knowledge and devotion. (3:240-241). They rule the whole world by means of delusion etc. They are generated from the *Raja* (action) attribute in the mind and are the root of the demoniacal endowment. They thrive on ignorance of the mind and are the source of the demoniacal actions. Though they arise from the *Raja* attribute, they are favourites of the *Tama* attribute which is the main constituent of indiscrimination and delusion. (3:243-244). They operate through hope and

delusion. (3:246-247). Desire and anger are closely connected with ego and delusion. Because of them, falsehood and hypocrisy have prevailed over truth and by destroying peace and through the importance given to Maya, minds of even saints have been polluted. (3:249-251). They destroy the sense of discrimination, of dispassion and control over senses. They destroy happiness by destroying Knowledge and instil the three forms of torture (personal, external and elemental) in the hearts of people. After birth they are attached to the physical body and reside in the mind and therefore cannot be discovered even by Brahmadeo. They destroy the personality of even a person of Knowledge and nobody can control them. (3:253-256). Pure Knowledge is always associated with desire and anger and is veiled by them. (3:262). Therefore one should first conquer them before attaining Knowledge. It is however very difficult to do so because more one tries more it helps them to strengthen their hold and because of this even Hathayogis are defeated. There is only one method of bringing them under control. (3:264-267)

LOSING DESIRE AND ANGER LEAD TO SELF-REALIZATION

Their original residence is in the sense-organs from where impetus for action originates. Therefore it is necessary to exercise control on the sense-organs which will restrict your mind from the pleasure-seeking tendency. This will free your intellect and thus they will lose their support. (3:268-269). Once a person loses anger and desire, the person will realise Brahman in whose bliss he will enjoy. This is the secret between a Guru and his disciple and it is also the union of the Self

and the Brahman in which he remains stable perpetually. (3:271-272)

CHAPTER 4

YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

KARMAYOGA IS ANCIENT

Shri Krishna says, "I had told this Yoga (*Karmayoga*) earlier to Vivaswat (the Sun-deity) But that was long ago. He then told this to Vaivaswat Manu. Manu acted according to it and advised Ikshwaku about it. In this tradition many Royal Yogis came to know it but there does not seem to be anyone who knows about it now. This is because people, having become more attracted towards carnal pleasures, forgot about the Knowledge of the Self. Having gone astray in their beliefs they came to think that carnal pleasures are the highest kind of happiness. (4:16-21). How will the ignoramus who have not ever experienced an iota of dispassion and who do not understand what discrimination is, can attain me? I do not know how this delusion grew, but a lot of time was lost with the result that this yoga was forgotten on this earth. Arjuna, that is the yoga which I explained to you. This yoga is like a life-secret, but how can I conceal it from you? (4:25-28)

ARJUNA'S DOUBT

At this, Arjuna raised a doubt by asking Shri Krishna, "You are living today and Vivaswat lived in ancient times. Then how could you have told him this Yoga?" (4:32-40)

SHRI KRISHNA REMEMBERS ALL AVATARS

Shri Krishna replied, "It is natural that you should think you were not existing at the time Viwaswat was existing. What you do not know is that both you and I have gone through many births. You have no memory of them but I remember all my incarnations. (4:41-43)

"I TAKE BIRTH TO PROTECT THE GOOD IN EVERY ERA"

Though not tainted by birth (i.e. subject to birth-death cycles), I do take birth and assume form by means of *Maya*, but this does not affect my remaining untainted by destruction, form and attributes. (4:44-46). Because it is the tradition from early times that I should protect the *Dharma* (righteousness) appropriate to the particular age (*Yuga*), I take birth to protect my devotees and destroy the ignorance whenever wickedness defeats righteousness. (4:49-50). Then I eliminate the wickedness and erase the stains of the sins and by bringing together the *Dharma* and ethics remove the lack of discrimination. Whole world then fills with happiness, *Dharma* reigns in the world and devotees are full of *Sattva* attribute. Whenever I take birth, sins vanish and merit rises. I take birth for these tasks in every *Yuga*. Only persons of knowledge know this secret of mine. (4:51-57)

He who understands that I am not attached to anything, that I take birth though I am birthless and perform

actions though I am actionless is liberated. Though he may be in his body yet he is not bound by it. He comes to me when he dies. (4:58-59).

GRACING DEVOTEES ACCORDING TO PERCEPTION

Those of my devotees who do not bother about the past or the future are not affected by anger and desire. They become one with me and spend their life only for serving me. Those who are immersed in the knowledge of the Self by becoming unattached, become one with me and then there is no difference between them and me. (4: 60-63)

I grace people according to the manner by which they express their devotion to me. It is the natural tendency of man to do my *upasana* (worship). But through ignorance or due to delusion, most people think of me in many different forms though I am one and the only God. I am without name but they assign different names to the different forms which they consider as deities. I am all pervading but they qualify my forms as superior or inferior. (4:66-70). With desire in their minds they worship these deities. They gain the fruits therefrom but actually that is the fruit of their actions, there being nothing other than actions which can give fruits. (4:71-73). I am the witness to the worship of all these deities but each worshipper gets the fruits according to his attitude. (4:76)

FOUR CASTES

Though all persons are alike, I have divided them into four types *according to their qualities and actions*. Thus the four castes have been created. The actions prescribed for each caste have been determined taking

into account the combination of their natural tendencies and qualities. Therefore even though the four castes have originated from me, I am not their creator and one who understands this is liberated from the ties of the actions. (4:77-81).
The desireless actions of the past seekers who understood this led to their liberation. (4:82-83).

THOUGHTS OF ACTIONS INVOLVE

Even wise persons are puzzled about the significance of action and non-action therefore it should not be interpreted as one likes. (4:84-85). The actions of even spiritually very powerful persons have turned out to be desireful actions because of wrong notion of actionlessness. (4:87). I shall explain this to you. (4: 88)

What leads to the formation of the universe should be understood as action and its meaning should be understood first. One should also understand the appropriate action for each caste and the fruits thereof. Also one must understand the nature of the prohibited actions so that one does not get involved in them. This world is governed by actions therefore the scope of actions is very mysterious. (4:89-92)

A PERFECT PERSON

Now listen to the characteristics of a person who has reached perfection. Even as he performs actions he does not consider himself to be the doer and does not keep expectations about the fruits. Apart from a sense of duty, he has no other reason for actions. It must then be considered that actionlessness has been well ingrained in such a person. Such a person should be

considered as having understood the meaning of non-action and an enlightened person. (4:93-95). He who realises Self knowing that performance of his actions is unreal from the point of view of the Self is a real person of non-action. (4:98). He enjoys the worldly pleasures without being attached or being affected by them. And even by remaining in one place he travels through the universe and actually himself becomes the universe. (4:101-102).
He who is not averse to actions nor is drawn to them and is not tainted by the ambitious thoughts like "I shall do this" or "I shall complete this" and has offered all his actions to Knowledge should be considered as Supreme Brahman itself. (4:103-105).

He is not bothered about his person, is desireless about the fruits of his actions and is always happy. He is always content but constantly seeks the experience of the Self. (4:106-107). Shedding expectations and ego, he experiences more and more the sweetness of the bliss of the Self. Therefore he is happy with whatever comes to his lot. He does not say that this is mine and that is somebody else's. The very actions he performs merge into him because he does not see anything other than Self in this world. How can actions affect such a person? (4:108-112). There is no doubt that such a person is liberated in all ways, he remains actionless even while doing actions and attributeless even though outwardly he may appear to have attributes. (4:114). Since he considers action itself as Brahman all his actions become non-actions and therefore he remains unattached to them. (4:121)

YAJNAS

Now Shri Krishna tells about various kinds of Yajnas. (Note that traditionally a Yajna needs a fire in which various sacrificial offerings are made.)

Some people practise yoga after attaining maturity by giving up the indiscrimination from their nature and adopting dispassion. This is their yajna in which they indulge day and night. Only those who have sacrificed the ignorance along with their mind in the fire of (i.e. with the help of) the mantras given by their Guru should do this yajna. (4:122-123).

Daivayajna: A *yajna*, performed in the fire of Yoga with the intention of attaining Self is called *Daivayajna*. (4:124)

Brahmayajna: Some others follow the path of knowledge to attain Brahman. This is also a type of *Yajna* in which Knowledge itself is burnt as an offering in the fire of Brahman until Knowledge and the knower become one with the Brahman. This is called *Brahmayajna*. (4:125).

(N.B. These two yajnas are mentioned in the Gita Shloka 4:25 which is translated as "Some yogis worship the deities alone while others offer sacrifice itself by the way of sacrifice in the fire of Brahman." This is difficult to understand in the original but Dnyaneshwar Maharaj has expanded upon it.)

Meditation: Some sacrifice the sense pleasures through self control and practice of three stages of yogic meditation (viz. *Dhyan, Dharana and Samadhi*). (4:125-129).

Yajna of Self-control: Some others burn their desires and ambition from the five sense-organs after attaining dispassion. Thus all the bad attributes vanish. (4:130)

***Guru-mantra*:** Some others, with dispassionate attitude and the continuous chanting of the mantras given by their Guru, began lighting the fire of knowledge (of the Self) and after avoiding the pitfalls of occult powers (*Siddhis*) achieved the first spark of Knowledge. After controlling the mind and burning the desires and family ties and through control of breathing (*Pranayama*) they become one with the Brahman. What remains is the bliss of the knowledge of the Self. (4:131-139)

These are all different types of yajnas but with the same goal. (4:140).

There are other types of Yajnas also e.g. ***Dravyayajna*** or offering of wealth, ***Tapoyajna*** or performing penance, and ***Yogayajna*** or practising Yoga. Some offer words i.e. speech as Yajna which is called ***Vagyajna***. Others offer their learning to attain Brahman and that is called ***Dnyanyajna***. (4:141).

Arjuna, all these yajnas are difficult and laborious. But persons who control their senses and practice yoga can do them because they have sacrificed their ego. (4:142-143).

Pranayama There are still others who practice ***Pranayama*** i.e. breath control. Such yogis are called *Pranayamis*. (4:145). Some others use a technique called ***Vajrayoga*** in which diet is controlled and *Pranas* are sacrificed into Prana. (See note regarding *Pranas* at the end of Ch 6). All these persons who shed the grime

from their mind by various yajnas have liberation as their goal. (4:146).

ATTAINING BRAHMAN BY *YAJNAS*

Thus, all these people perform these various yajnas with the intention of attaining liberation and wash away their impurities of the mind by their means. (4:147). After the ignorance about the Soul is burnt away what remains is its pure form alone and then there remains no difference between the sacrificial fire and the performer of sacrifice. Thus the intention of the performer is fulfilled, sacrifice ends and all actions get nullified. Then the thoughts or imaginations do not enter the mind, the duality ends and with the ultimate Knowledge that remains they experience the unification with the Brahman. (4:148-151).

Others lead a wasted life But those, who after being born do not practice yoga or perform *yajnas* or practice self-control have an unworthy life in this world and their status in the afterworld need not even be mentioned. (4:152-154). All these *yajnas*, described in detail in the *Vedas* are possible only through actions and when one understands this then those actions do not bind him. (4:155-156).

Dravyayajnas inferior to dnyanayajnas The *yajnas* broadly described in the Vedas needing external actions (like burning materials in fire) lead you only to attaining heavenly plane. But these are all *dravyayajnas* i.e. *yajnas* involving wealth and are very inferior to the *dnyanayajnas* or *yajnas* of knowledge. (4:157-158)

SERVING SAINTS GIVES KNOWLEDGE

If you desire to gain this most superior knowledge then you should serve saints in every way. They are the depository of knowledge and service is the gate to it. Therefore capture it by serving them. Then make your obeisance to them with all you have, and shedding your ego be their servant. Then ask them questions about whatever you wish to know and they will explain it to you. Once you understand it desires will not enter your mind. You will lose all your fears and be fit to attain Brahman and will see everything including yourself as my form. Thus your delusion will vanish once you get the favours of a true Guru. (4:164-170)

KNOWLEDGE IS INCOMPARABLE

This knowledge is so powerful that it can remove the ignorance in your mind even if you are a worst sinner or full of illusion and delusion. There is nothing else in this world comparable to Knowledge and as encompassing. (4:172-174). This knowledge cannot be compared with anything except itself just as if one asks the taste of nectar the answer is like nectar and nothing else. Now I shall tell you how to gain that Knowledge. (4:180-185).

PEACE COMES WITH KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge seeks him who is fed up with sense-pleasures in preference to the pleasure of the Self-realisation, who does not bother about the sense organs, who does not allow desires enter his mind, does not feel responsible for the things which occur naturally and who has become happy by faith. Peace resides in the mind of such a person. Once the Knowledge becomes firm in his mind he attains self-realisation and peace reigns in his mind. He sees peace wherever he casts his

glance and duality about “this is mine” and “that is another person’s” vanishes from his mind. (4:186-190).

UNINTERTESTED PERSON'S LIFE IS MEANINGLESS

What meaning does the life of a person not interested in knowledge have? Death is preferable to such a life. (4:192). A person may not have gained knowledge but if he shows even a little interest then there is some hope that he will gain it. But if he does not then he will be surely afflicted by doubts. (4:194-195). One who is thus afflicted by doubts can be definitely considered as lost to the happiness in this world as well as the next. (4:198). A doubting person does not differentiate between truth and falsehood, proper and improper, beneficial and harmful. (4:200). Therefore there is no greater sin than to doubt. The one means of destroying it is the Knowledge. (4:202-203). Therefore Arjuna, get rid of the doubts in your mind. (4:208).

Notes on Vivaswat, Vaivaswat manu and Ikshwaku
(4:16-21)**:** According to the Puranas, Vivawan is the Sun-god of the Vedic times. He was one of the twelve sons of Adti known as the Adityas born of Rishi Kashyap. The latter was the son of Marichi, one of the seven Rishis (Saptarshi) considered to be the sons of Brahma the Creator, born from his will power. Vivaswat’s son Vaivaswat was a Manu that is progenitor of mankind. Manu’s son Ikshwaku is the first of the Solar dynasty of kings (so called because his grandfather was the Sun-god Vivaswan). Solar Dynasty ruled in Ayodhya in north India. Shri Rama

the hero of Ramayana was the 58th king in the genealogy given in the Puranas.

Historians, interpreting the tales given in the Puranas, say that of the twelve Adityas Indra, Varuna, Vivaswan and Vishnu became the most distinguished. These belonged to the Deva branch of Aryans as opposed to the asura branch of Aryans which settled in Persian region and were always at war with the Deva Aryans.

Vivaswan was not a warrior but a man of learning and a poet. Indra and Vishnu led the Aryan clans in their migration to the Afganistan region and the Northern part of India. The conquered lands were distributed among 22 groups of which 11 were in India. Manu belonged to one of the latter. He chose Ayodhya on the banks of river Sharayu as the capital of his kingdom. Like his father Manu also was not a warrior but a man of learning, religion and peace. He is credited with the Code of Ethics known as Manusmriti. After a short rule of about 10 years Manu retired to the forest leaving the kingdom to his son Ikshwaku. This probably occurred in about 2800 BC.

CHAPTER 5

RENUNCIATION

ARJUNA'S DOUBT

Arjuna is now confused and asks Shri Krishna. "First you told me to give up actions and now you are insisting on actions. (5:2). Which of the two paths is better?" (5:6)

KARMAYOGA AND *KARMASANYAS* ARE SAME IN EFFECT

Shri Krishna said, "Both *Karmasanyasa* (renouncing actions) and *Karmayoga* (performing actions without desire for fruits) lead to liberation. But it would appear that *Karmyoga* is clearer and easier to follow for big and small. If one thinks carefully. it would be clear that by this path the fruits of *Karmasanyasa* are also gained automatically. I shall now tell you the qualities of a *sanyasi* and then you will realise that both paths are the same. (5:14-18).

QUALITIES OF A SANYASI

A *sanyasi* does not grieve about his gains or losses and does not crave for what he has not received. His mind is steady as a mountain. He does not at all have feelings in his mind about "me" and "mine". Such a person is forever a *sanyasi* (renunciate). In this state of his mind he is dissociated from the fruits of actions and he is ever happy. Such a person does not have to leave his home. family and possessions to become a sanyasi because he is already dissociated from desires in his mind. (5:19-22). He whose intellect is free from desires does not get caught in the bindings of the actions. A person attains the qualities of a *sanyasi* (renunciate) only when desires are given up. Therefore both *Karmasanyasa* (renouncing actions) and *Karmayoga* (performing actions without desire for fruits) are the same. (5:23-25). Only ignorant persons think that the

two (i.e. *Jnyanayoga* of the Sankhyas and *Karmayoga*) are different but those who have experienced Self know that they are not different. (5:26-28). One who follows the Yoga path attains very soon the bliss of the Brahman but one who cannot succeed in it wastes his efforts and cannot be a real renunciate. (5:32-33).

ATTITUDE OF A NON-DOER IS NECESSARY

A person who has kept his mind free of delusion and by purifying it with the help of Guru's mantra merged it in the Self. becomes the Self. (5:34). A person who, after getting rid of desires, has become consciousness (Brahman) itself, pervades the expanse of the three worlds (i.e. heaven. earth and the nether) through the form of the Self, even by being at one place. (5:36). For such a person. language like "This is done by me" or "I want to do this" becomes redundant and he remains a non-doer in spite of his actions. Because such a person is not even conscious of his body, even though his outward behaviour and his bodily functions appear to be normal. Then how can he have the ego about his actions? (5:37-38).

When we think about the Almighty God we see that the all-pervading God is apparently a non-doer. He creates this expanse of the three worlds but He does not get involved with these actions even if you call Him a doer. He raises populations of creatures from the **five elements** (earth. water. air. fire and sky or space. *See note at the end of the Chapter*) and He is in all but belongs to none. In fact He is not even aware about the creation and destruction of the world. (5:76-79). He assumes form by taking birth but His formlessness is

not affected. Therefore to say that He creates. maintains and destroys is rooted in ignorance. (5:81-82).

When this ignorance is totally destroyed then delusion goes and non-doing nature of God becomes clear. Once a person is convinced in his mind that God is a non-doer then the fundamental idea that "He is not different from me" is naturally established. Once this sense has arisen in the mind then he does not see himself different from anything in the three worlds and considers the world to be as liberated as he is. (5:83-85). Such persons have a sense of equability towards everything in this world, (5:88). Such men of Knowledge do not notice differences between different creatures. (5:93-95). Listen now to the characteristics of the person who possesses this sense of equability. (5:102).

INDIFFERENCE TO SUCCESS OR FAILURE

One who is not affected by the success or failure (or gains and losses) of his actions is a person with sense of equability. He is the Brahman personified. (5:103-104). Due to the limitless internal bliss of the Self he is not attracted towards the external worldly pleasures. (5:105-106). It is only those who have not experienced this internal bliss that are attracted towards the impermanent worldly pleasures. (5:110). The pleasures of the sense-objects are actually miseries from the beginning to the end but ignorant people cannot do without them. (5:120). It is these people who are addicted to the sense pleasures that have given the appearance of truth to this worldly delusion of Maya. (5:126).

Persons who have controlled passions totally are not at all aware of the sorrows born out of sense-pleasures. (5:129). They are internally filled with bliss. But their way of enjoying that bliss is unusual. They are not aware that they are the enjoyers because they are in a state of egolessness and oneness with the Supreme. (5:131-133). This Bliss of the Self is the best, is indestructible and limitless. Only the desireless persons are worthy of it. (5:146). If you ask how these persons reached this stage while still living, it is because first they give up the pleasures with dispassion and concentrating at the point in between the eyebrows and while controlling the breath (*Pranayama*), they meditate with their eyes turned backwards. (5:151-153). Thus their mind turns inwards and through the state of *samadhi* they take the life-force and the mind upwards towards the experience of Brahman. When mind dissolves, all desires and ego also dissolve. Therefore he who experiences the bliss becomes one with Brahman while still living. (5:155-157).

Note on Five elements or Principles (5:76-79): Indian philosophy postulates the world to be made of five principles or elements. Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Sky or Space. When seen from the modern physical point of view, the first three are the three states of matter namely solid, liquid and gaseous states. The fourth represents the energy while the fifth is the space. This is as per the understanding of the thinkers at the beginning of human civilisation Modern science has found more than 100 elements, about 92 of them occurring naturally. But this does not change the basic arguments.

Note on Samadhi (5:155-157): This is a state of deep trance without thoughts during meditation.

CHAPTER 6

MEDITATION

YOGI NOT DIFFERENT FROM *SANYASI*

Shri Krishna further said, "Yogi (*Karmayogi*) and sanyasi are both same. You may think they are different but on careful thinking you will find that they are the same. It is clear that except for the differences in names yoga is the same as sanyas and from spiritual point of view there is no difference at all between the two. (6:39-40). It is an accepted principle that one who performs actions but does not get attached to the fruits thereof, should only be considered as a yogi. (6:43). He who performs whichever actions appropriate to his caste and circumstances, but does not maintain the ego about his being the doer and does not permit the desire of the fruits to touch his mind is a sanyasi and doubtless is a yogi also. (6:45-47)

On the other hand, he who, forsakes the regular routine duties and incidental duties (like offering to forefathers etc.) considering them to be restrictive and instead immediately gets himself involved in other actions, gets himself into unnecessary problems. Why should one give up the burden of family life only to burden himself

with the life of a renunciate? Therefore, one who remains within the prescribed code of actions by doing daily fire rituals etc. enjoys automatically the yogic bliss. (6:48-51)

Shastras have stated that a *Sanyasi* is a yogi because it is only when the desire goes that the essence of yoga is obtained. (6:52-53)

YOGI SHOULD NOT ABANDON ACTIONS

One who follows the yoga path should not give up the path of actions. By assuming proper posture and breath-control, by steadying the intellect, controlling the organs and keeping them away from the sense-pleasures, he should turn the consciousness inwards and meditate by continued abstraction of mind (*Dharana*). This will lead to the elimination of tendencies towards materialistic actions. Then the means (*sadhan*) becomes one with the goal and one becomes steady in he state of *samadhi*. By practising thus the yogi reaches perfection. Now listen to the characteristics of such a perfect person. (6:54- 61)

A perfect person Sense objects do not enter his mind and he is engrossed in the Knowledge of the Self. He is not excited by the pleasures and sorrows in the world nor is he enticed by pleasures. Even if he has to perform actions he does not care about the fruits thereof. His actions are just sufficient for the survival of the body, otherwise he is oblivious to other actions. Such a person may be considered as settled in yoga. (6:62-65)

ARJUNA'S QUERY

Arjuna then asked (not in the Gita), "Who gives him this capability?" (6:66)

THE HARMFUL EGO

Shri Krishna said, "In this state of oneness who can give what and to whom? (6:67).

It is due to ignorance that a person dreams of life and death. But when he wakes up he realises that the dreams were unreal and becomes aware of the truth that he himself is the Brahman. We harm ourselves by the unnecessary ***I-am-the-body*** ego. (6:68-70).

Thoughtfully, one should give up this ego and be benefited by becoming one with the Brahman. Really speaking, by being infatuated with the body, one becomes one's own enemy. (6:71-72). An individual himself is Brahman but his intellect does not believe it. (6:75). A person who nurtures desire becomes his own enemy. On the other hand, he who does not bother about these bindings is the real knower of the Self. (6:80).

For a person who has conquered his mind and calmed his desires the Supreme Self is not very far. When wishful thoughts disappear from the mind the soul becomes Brahman. (6:81-82). When the false ego vanishes completely he becomes one with the Brahman already present within him. The thoughts of hot and cold, happiness and sorrow, honour and insult are not possible in such a person. Just as whatever comes in the path of the sun gets illuminated, whoever comes in the path of such a perfect person becomes like him. The thoughts that these deeds are good and those are bad do not enter his mind because he has become one

with the Brahman and is devoid of duality. When he ponders over the nature of this world he finds that it is unreal and when he searches for the reality he experiences that that reality is himself. When he later tries to determine whether he is bound by space and time or the all-pervading, all his efforts stop because now his feeling of duality with Brahman vanishes. One who has conquered his senses while remaining in his body has automatically reached the level of Brahman. Such a person should be called a yogi and the master of his senses. The differences like big and small do not enter his mind, and a lump of earth, a precious stone or gold are the same to him. (6:84-92). Then how can the ideas about friend and foe, a relative or a stranger come to his mind? (6:94). Everything in this world appears as Brahman to him. One who has experienced that this world is pervaded by Brahman is a person with vision of equability towards everything. (6:100-101). Even thoughts about such a person coming to one's mind make him become like that person. (6:104). But there is no limit to the praise of such a person. (6:111).

ARJUNA ASKS FOR ADVICE

Arjuna then expressed his desire that though he does not have the qualities of saints in him and perhaps he is not yet fit to understand the importance of these characteristics, Shri Krishna's advice might make him fit to become one with Brahman. (6:138-140). Shri Krishna, realising that this is the opportune time to tell him about the practice of Yoga, told Arjuna, (6:151)

ADVICE ON KUNDALINI YOGA

""What I am going to tell you now is about that Yoga path which is the king among all yoga paths, therefore

listen carefully. By this path one gains innumerable fruits of detachment through deliberate actions. Lord Shiva is even now a follower of this path. Some Yogis tried other ways to attain Brahman but getting wiser by their experience they had to turn to this straight path of Self-realisation after which they made rapid progress. A person who has discovered this path forgets his hunger and thirst and is not aware about when the day comes or when the night falls. Every step in this path opens towards the mine of liberation. Whether you go eastward or westward the progress on this path occurs quietly and definitely. (6:152-159). Now I shall tell you the details but they are useful only if you experience them. (6:163).

Selection of location First of all a suitable place should be selected for the practice. One should get a feeling of happiness on sitting there and a feeling that he should not leave the place. One's sense of dispassion should increase while sitting there. Saints should have occupied that place earlier, the effects of which are still felt by getting a feeling of satisfaction, courage and zeal. The practice of yoga should occur naturally by sitting there and the beauty of the surroundings should give one the experience of the bliss of the Self. Even an atheist should feel like doing tapas there. (6:163-167)

That place should be beautiful and pure. It should be inhabited only by seekers and be away from the crowds of ordinary people. Plenty of roots and fruit-laden trees should be available throughout the year and water, especially from natural fountains, should be available even in dry season. It should enjoy mild sun and cool breeze. It should be so thickly wooded that not only

wild animals but even bees and parrots cannot enter. But there may be a few water birds around and perhaps a cuckoo and occasional peacock may also be there. Arjuna, one should carefully search for such a place looking for a secret cave or a temple of Lord Shiva. (6:171-179).

Preparation of the seat After selecting one of the two places (cave or temple), one should sit there alone for a long time and check whether or not the mind becomes calm. If it becomes calm then one should prepare a seat there. The seat should be made of Darbha grass over which one should put a deerskin and cover it further by a clean washed cloth. The seat should be level and not too high or too low from the ground. If the seat is too high it will make the body unstable and if too low then the body will touch the ground. In short the seat should be steady and comfortable. (6: 180-185).

Stabilising the mind Then one should sit there concentrating the mind while remembering one's Guru. The Guru must be remembered until the mind is filled with *Sattvic* (pure) feelings so that one's ego gets blunted, mind is rid of thoughts of sense-objects and the organs do not stir. One should remain in this state until one experiences that the mind has merged with the heart. In this state one experiences that body automatically becomes steady and airs in the body are coming together. After remaining in this state the mind stabilises, interest in worldly affairs gets inhibited and he attains the state of deep trance (*samadhi*) effortlessly as soon as he sits on the seat. (6: 186-191).

Yogic posture and Chakras Now listen carefully to the details about the yogic posture. First sit with the calves

of the legs pressed against the thighs and keeping the left leg on the other leg at a slight angle, press the right sole steadily on the anus, keeping the sole of the left foot naturally pressed on the right foot. Pressing the heel tightly at the centre of the space between the anus and the base of the generating organ, one should balance the body on it. Keeping the two ankles straight he should lift the base of the spinal column. This will make the whole body to be supported and balanced on the heel. This is the characteristic of the **Mula** *Bandha* posture (the knot at the root or base) also known as *Vajrasana*. Once this posture is successful then the downward path of the *Apana* part of the vital breath (or life force) gets blocked and it starts receding inside. (6:192-200). (See the note regarding Prana at the end of the chapter)

Then let both palms held in cupped shape rest on the left leg which will make the shoulders rise. The head automatically gets in between them. The eyes then remain in half-closed state and the sight turns inwards. Even if it turns outwards it can look only up to the tip of the nose. The desire to look around vanishes. Then the neck gets contracted and the chin presses against the chest hiding the throat. This posture of the neck and chest is called the **Jalandhar** *Bandha* or knot. (6:201-208).

Then the belly becomes flat and the navel gets raised. The posture of the part of the body between the navel and the anus is called **Odhiyana** *Bandha* or knot. (6:209-210).

Thus the Yoga practice starts with the external parts of the body while the thoughts, desires and other affairs of

the mind vanish. He is not aware anymore of hunger and sleep. (6:211-213).

Awakening of Kundalini The *Apana* breath then hits the *Muladhar Chakra* situated at between the anus and the generating organ and removes all the impurities accumulated there since childhood. (*See the note on the Chakras at the end of chapter*). Then the *Apana* breath rises to the *Manipur Chakra* situated just below the navel and starts hitting against it. Thus the confined breath stirs the body from inside and removes the impurities accumulated since childhood. Then the powerful breath enters the abdomen and eliminates the phlegm and bile. Then it reaches the centres of the seven essential elements (viz. flesh, blood, muscles, bones, marrow, chyle and semen), gets rid of the fat, and drives the marrow out from the bones. It cleans the blood vessels and relaxes the organs which may frighten the seeker but he should not get frightened. By creating these ailments it throws the diseases out from the body. Then the *Apana* breath brings the solid flesh and bones and the liquid blood together. (6:214-220).

While this goes on the *Kundalini* force awakens by virtue of the heat created by the yogic posture. It was sleeping like a baby cobra coiled in three and half coils near the navel with its mouth facing down, (6:221-223) but now gets awakened due to the constriction by the *Mula Bandha*. (6:225).

Kundalini reaches other Chakras and purifies the body When it wakes up it opens its mouth and swallows the *Apana* which has occupied the space in the region of the heart. It then swallows the fat and excess flesh from the region of the heart and wherever

else it can find flesh. (6:229-231). Then it searches for the palms and soles, tears open the upper parts and searches every joint and organ. It extracts the vitality from the nails, purifies the skin and makes it touch the bones. Then it cleans the insides of the bones and scrapes the interior of the blood vessels with the result that the roots of the hair are burnt. It then drinks off the seven essential elements and makes the body hot and dry. (6:232-235).

It then draws back the *Prana* coming out of the nose and the *Apana* which is inside and when they meet only the curtains of the six *Chakras* separate them. They would have met except that Kundalini asks them, "What business have you here? Get aside!" The principle is that the Kundalini eats off the Earth principle (solid part) and also completely licks off the Water principle (liquid part) from the body and feeling satiated becomes mild and rests at the **Sushumna** (central) nerve in the spine. (6:236-240). In this satisfied mood it vomits the saliva which becomes the nectar which guards the body. At this stage the heat leaves the body which now becomes cool from inside as well as from outside because of which the lost strength returns. The flow in the *Sushumna* nerve stops and the functions of the remaining nine Pranas also stop. Because of this the body is without action and becomes still. The Ida and Pingala nerves in the spine meet and the three knots get loosened and the curtains of the six *Chakras* open. Then the vital airs passing through the right and left nostrils (which are designated Sun and Moon respectively) fade to the extent that even a flame will not flicker by them. (6:241-245). At this time, the intellect gets stilled and the remaining fragrance in the *Prana* enters the

Sushumna nerve along with the Kundalini. Then the spiritual nectar (Ambrosia or *Amrit*) situated at the crown of the head spills into the mouth of the Kundalini and then gets absorbed throughout the body including the ten Pranas. (6:246-248).

Body gets rejuvenated The skin which veils the lustre of this nectar but is brightened by it is shed and all the organs show their bright aura. (6:250, 252-253). Now even Death is afraid of it (the body) and the aging process gets reversed. The yogi gets back his lost childhood and he looks like a boy. (6:259-261). He gets bright new nails. He gets new teeth also but they are tiny like a row of pearls. Tiny hair grow on the body. The palms and soles become red and the eyes become so clean that his vision cannot get confined within the eyelids and even with half-closed eyes the range of his vision reaches the sky. (6:262, 265-267). Though the colour of his skin becomes golden, his body becomes light as air because now there is no earth and water principles in it. He is able to see beyond the seas and understand what is going on in heaven. He is able to understand what is in an ant's mind and he can ride the wind. Even if he walks on water his feet do not get wet. Thus he attains such occult powers (*Siddhis*). (6:268-270).

Divine experiences Now listen to what happens further. The *Kundalini*, with the help of *Prana* rises up to the heart through the *Sushumna* nerve. (6:271). This *Kundalini* now may be considered as the basis of this universe and of AUM which is the expression of Supreme Soul. (6:272-273). The yogi then starts hearing the divine *Anahat* sound. (6:274). The intellect which is near the *Kundalini* power becomes active and

is now able to hear some of this Anahat sound. (6:275). There are ten types of *Anahat* sound and he hears the first type of sound called *Ghosha* and in this basin of *Ghosha* itself sound pictures are then generated which one sees through one's imagination but when the person is not himself where is the imagination? Actually it is impossible to explain where the sound is coming from. (6:276-277). I forgot to tell you one thing that is the *Anahat* sound reverberations near the heart persist as long as Air principle is not destroyed. The reverberations in the Sky principle (space) open the window of the *Brahmarandhra* (or*Sahasrar*) easily. There is another space above the *Sahasrar* (lotus of thousand petals) where the Consciousness (*Chaitanya*) resides without support. (6:278-280). There the *Kundalini* flashes its energy and by giving an offering of it to the intellect it makes the duality disappear. Now the *Kundalini* drops its brilliance and merges with the *Prana*. At that time it looks like a golden robe shed by a statue of air or like a tongue of lightening. (6:281-284). Thus when it reaches up to the *Sahasrar* it looks like a golden chain or a stream of shining water. Then it suddenly vanishes in the space of the spiritual heart and its power dissolves into itself. We should really call it power but it is really the life-force which is no longer aware now of any material aspect of the world. (*See notes at the end of Chapter*.) In this state things like conquering the mind, holding the breath or meditating do not remain. Having desires or giving them up also stop. Therefore this Kundalini may be considered as the melting pot of all the five principles. (6:286-290). Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says, "Using the body itself to devour the ego about the body is the principle of the Nath Panth (sect). Shri Krishna has

merely mentioned it in the Gita, but I have put the details before the audience." (6:291-292)

Siddhis When the lustre of the power vanishes, the appearance of the body also changes and eyes of common people cannot see the real form of the yogi. Actually the gross body continues to possess the limbs and other organs but it is now made of air principle. (6:293-294). His body can become so light that he is called Khechar i.e. one who can travel through space. Once he reaches this stage his body performs miracles because now he has gained *Siddhis*. (6:296). One need not go into the details about these *Siddhis*, main point being that the three principles Earth, Water and Fire have disappeared from within his body. Of the five principles, Water principle has destroyed the Earth principle and Air principle has destroyed the Water principle while in the spiritual heart, the Air principle has destroyed the Fire principle. What remains is the Air principle in the shape of the body. But after some time that too vanishes in the space of the spiritual heart. At this time the *Kundalini* changes its name to Marut i.e. wind or air. But until it merges into Brahman its form as power persists. (6:297-301).

Then it breaks the Jalandhar knot and surges through the throat to the *Brahmarandhra*. With the help of recitation of the basic sound **AUM**, it rises to the *Pashyanti* stage of the sound and enters the *Brahmarandhra* up to the half of *Tanmatra*. By steadying itself in the *Brahmarandhra*, it embraces the Brahman. The curtain of the five principles is withdrawn and the power meets the Supreme Brahman and evaporates into it along with the Sky principle. (6:302-306). (*See the note at the end of the chapter*)

Thus the soul which was separated from the Brahman by virtue of acquiring the body enters the Brahman. At that time thoughts about whether the soul is different from me (i.e. the Brahman) does not survive in the mind. (6:307-309). The person now experiences merging of what is described as Sky principle with the sky. This cannot be described in words but has only to be experienced. (6:310-311). Arjuna, understand that this phenomenon is not something explicit which can be understood by listening to words. There is nothing more left for him to know. I can only say that if one is fortunate then one should experience it and be one with the Brahman. (6:316-318). But it is meaningless to talk about it. That (the Brahman) is the root of the universe, fruit of the yoga, and the energy of the bliss. That is where the forms dissolve. It is the place of liberation and beginning and end disappear there. It is the seed of the five principles and brightness of the Great Effulgence. When the non-believers tortured my devotees, I had to assume my beautiful four-armed form out of it (the Brahman). The great bliss of this state is beyond description. Persons who have realised Self by steadily striving for it have become pure and reached my status. (6:321-326).

ARJUNA'S DOUBT

Arjuna now gets a doubt whether he is fit for practising this yoga. He asks,

"Shri Krishna, I am convinced about the excellence of this yoga practice. But I am not worthy enough to practice it. What I want to ask you is whether would anybody be able to practice it or whether it requires one to be qualified to practice it." (6:333-337).

WORTHINESS FOR YOGA PRACTICE

Shri Krishna replied. "This yoga is a means to liberation. Even an ordinary task cannot be successful unless the doer is worthy and capable of doing it. But the worthiness can be only judged if and when the task is successful. If there is worthiness then only a task which is begun becomes successful. But capability is not something one can easily acquire. When a person, by becoming detached performs the prescribed actions then he attains authority. You can use this trick to attain worthiness. (6:339-343).

Arjuna, one rule of the yoga practice is that he who does not perform prescribed actions does not become worthy. (6:344). One who is a slave to the pleasures of the tongue and of sleep does not have the right to practice yoga. Also, one who, out of obstinacy reduces his diet by suppressing his hunger and thirst and does not sleep properly cannot control his body. How can such a person succeed in yoga? Therefore one should not pamper the sense-pleasures but at the same time one should not totally abandon them also. (6:344-348). One should eat but it should be proper and in moderation. One should undertake only a limited number of tasks. One should talk only what is necessary, walk within limits and sleep at proper times only. (6:350). Even if one has to stay awake for any reason, it should not be beyond some specific limit. By such regular routine the essential constituents of the body remain in balance. And when the senses are satisfied in proper proportions the mind also remains satisfied. (6:351-352). Once the external organs become regulated the internal happiness increases and the yoga is achieved even without practice. (6:353). One who practices yoga by

remaining regular and controlled in his habits experiences the Self. (6:355). A person whose mind becomes steady and remains so until death, may be called a person who has achieved yoga. In this stage his mind may be compared to a flame in windless air. (6:357-358).

GAINS FROM YOGA PRACTICE

A beneficial thing often appears as painful to a person. Otherwise nothing is easier than the practice of Yoga. (6:363). Only with the practice of yoga, by sitting steadily in the posture as I described, can the sense-organs be disciplined. Once that is achieved the mind automatically sets itself towards the Soul. When it returns from there and looks back at the Self it realises that "***I have been That***" all the time. Then it is immersed in bliss and dissolves in the Self. It becomes one with That (Self or the Brahman) beyond which there is nothing else and which can never be realised through the senses. (6:364-368). In this state, his mind remains steady and his awareness about the body vanishes even if it is afflicted by severe pains. (6:369-371) Because of this indescribable bliss he forgets other things also. Because of the pleasure of the experience of the Self the mind forgets the desires and is no longer mindful of the worldly matters. The bliss which adorns the yoga, and which gives satisfaction and knowledge appears in form by the study of the yoga and the person who sees (experiences) it becomes of that form. (6:372-374).

ATTITUDES FOR STARTING YOGA PRACTICE

Arjuna, you may feel that this yoga is difficult, but in a way it is very easy. First one should get rid of desire

and anger which arise out of thoughts in the mind. (6:375) Once the sense pleasures are eliminated and organs are controlled, the mind becomes calm. Thus, once dispassion sets in then desires do not enter the mind and the intellect is sheltered by courage. The intellect, once it is helped by the courage, turns the mind towards Self-realisation. (6:375-378)

Even if this does not happen there is another easy way towards Self-realisation. First one should make a rule that a resolution once it is made will not be changed. (6:379-380). If this makes the mind become steady then well and good. But if it does not then let the mind wander freely. Then bring it back from wherever it has wandered. It will then be steady by itself. Once the mind is able to remain steady for some considerable time it will by itself come towards the Self and when it sees the Self it will become one with it. The duality will then merge into unification with the Self and the bright light of the union will illuminate the three worlds. (6:381-384). Everything becomes full of divine energy once the mind dissolves. (6:386)

If you are not able to do even this then listen further. (6:390) One should fix the thought in one's mind that "I am in the body of every being and everything is in Me; that this universe and all living beings are interlinked." (6:391-392). Needless to say that he who sees my presence in every being with the feeling of equality and does not harbour discrimination in his mind based on outwardly differences between them is undisputedly one with Me. (6:393-394). By not being involved with its affairs he reaches my level through his experiencing of the Brahman even while he is in his body. He who has experienced my all-pervasive nature himself

becomes all-pervasive. (6:401-402). I have seen that a person who has experienced Self in the three worlds is himself Brahman by virtue of his experience, even though he goes about normally in his body, with people thinking of him in their own perception as happy or unhappy as the case may be. (6:407-408). Therefore my advice to you Arjuna, is to practice the outlook of equality by which you will see the universe in yourself and be one with it. There is nothing else worth achieving other than this outlook of equality. (6:410)

ARJUNA'S DOUBT ON NATURE OF MIND

Arjuna now raises a doubt, "Shri Krishna, the path you have told just now will not sustain because of the nature of the mind. It tortures the intellect and weakens the determination and runs away from courage. It creates desires when one is in a state of satisfaction and wanders everywhere. It bounces if suppressed and assists if controlled. Therefore it does not appear possible that the mind would become steady and impart the sense of equality. (6:414-416).

DIRECTING THE MIND

Shri Krishna replied, "What you are saying is true. The mind is mercurial. But if one can turn it towards the practice of yoga observing dispassion, then it will become steady after some time. The mind has one good quality and that is, it develops a liking for a thing towards which gets attracted. Therefore one should make it to like the experience of the Self. (6:418-420).

Those who are not dispassionate and also do not practice yoga would find it impossible to control the mind. But if we do not at all bother about following the

techniques of regulated behaviour (Yama- Niyama) and about dispassion, and instead get immersed in sense pleasures and thus do not conquer the mind then how can it become steady? Therefore let your actions be such as to control the mind and then we shall see how it does not become steady. "(6:421-424)

ARJUNA'S DOUBT: WHAT IF SEEKER DIES HALFWAY?

Now Arjuna raises one more doubt. He says, "Shri Krishna, I did not know about this yoga until now therefore I was thinking that mind is uncontrollable. But now, by your grace, I have been introduced to the yoga. But I have one more doubt which only you can settle. (6:428-430). Suppose a person, deeply desirous of attaining liberation, gives up worldly pleasures in good faith but has not been able to fully succeed in his spiritual efforts. If such a person dies before attaining his goal then he will have neither the liberation nor the worldly pleasures. Thus in spite of having faith he has lost both. Please tell me what happens to such a person." (6:431-432).

SEEKER REBORN AS YOGI

Shri Krishna replied, "Arjuna, can there be anything other than liberation for one who longs for it? He is merely taking rest for some time, and even then during that rest period there is such a happiness which even gods do not gain. Had he practised yoga then he would have attained liberation before death. But because of lack of speed he had to stop in the middle. But liberation is reserved for him. (6:437-440). He reaches with ease the planes which even Indra the king of Gods finds it difficult to attain. But he gets sick of the

incomparable enjoyments on these planes and says all the time, 'Oh God! why are there impediments in my path to liberation?' Then he returns to the earth to be born in a religious family and starts gaining spiritual wealth. People in such family observe morals, speak clearly and truthfully and behave as prescribed in the Scriptures. (6:441-445). For them the Vedas are the living deity, actions are guided by *Swadharma* and discrimination, thoughts are only about God and the family deity is their wealth. Thus the person happily is born here on the strength of his meritorious deeds. (6:446-448). Or he is reborn into the family of a yogi of high level. The person even as a child is already loaded with knowledge because of his past. Due to the mature intellect he knows all branches of knowledge easily. (6:451-454). His intellect develops further from the point of his death in the earlier lifetime and he is able to grasp mysterious subjects and even difficult things told by a Guru. (6:457, 459). His sense-organs come under his control, mind becomes one with the *Prana* the vital life-breath and the *Prana* dissolves in the Consciousness. Somehow, yoga practice also comes easily to him and he can attain the samadhi state effortlessly. (6:460-461). He attains *Siddhis* even while he is an acolyte. (6:464). He is able to do his spiritual exercises effortlessly because he has reached the shores of the Self-realisation after millions of years and after overcoming the impediments of thousands of births. He gets the power of discrimination and putting that also behind in time and going beyond thought he becomes one with the Brahman. (6:465-467). He then gets that indescribable and unfathomable bliss which is beyond words. He becomes the living image of the state of the Brahman which is the ultimate destination. (6:469-470). He reaches this state while still in his

body. (6:480) Consider him as my life-force (Prana). He experiences that he is the devotee, devotion and the deity of devotion all three in one. This union of love between him and Me can be described only as he being the soul in My body. (6:482-485).

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1. ***NOTE on Pranas*** (6:192-200). There are ten classes of Prana (vital breath), five main and five secondary. The main types are Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana and Udana. Secondary Pranas are Naga, Kurma, Krikala, Devadatta and Dhananjaya.]

2. ***NOTE on Chakras*** (6:214-220). There are six Chakras or centres and a seventh centre which is the ultimate point where the Kundalini force has to reach. Muladhar Chakra is the lowermost Chakra or centre located near the base of one's spine near about the sexual organs and at which the dormant Kundalini is located. There are five more Chakras above the Muladhar. These are, the Swadhishtan Chakra located a little above the Muladhar Chakra and below the navel. The third is the Manipur chakra near the navel, the fourth is called Anahat Chakra and is near the heart. The fifth is the Vishuddha chakra at the throat. The sixth is the Adnya chakra in between the eyebrows. The last cetre is the Sahasrara chakra or Chakra of thousand lotus petals on the vertex crown. Starting from the Muladhar the successive chakras get activated each giving unique experiences. Activation of the Chakras accelerates the spiritual progress. In time and with regular practice, the seeker whose Kundalini is activated gets liberated from the influence of mundane subjects and finally gets the experience of the Divine.

Depending upon the efforts of the seeker and Guru's benevolence the time taken from the awakening and the ultimate realisation may vary between immediate to several years and sometimes lifetimes too.

3. *NOTE on Kalaa-Nada-Bindu verses* (6:286-290). Literally the verse 6:288 translates as : "Then it is called Power but really it is the *Prana* which is not aware now of *Nada* i.e. sound, *Bindu* i.e. bright light spot in between the eyebrows seen during meditation, or of *Kalaa* and the flame alternately the flame of *Kalaa*." The meanings of terms *Nada, Bindu* and *Kalaa* in Tantra system to which Kundalini yoga belongs are very much different from the conventional meanings mentioned above. A brief explanation of the terms *Nada-Bindu* and *Kalaa* is given below. (For details refer to Kundalini Yoga by M. P. Pandit, Published by Ganesh and Co, Chennai 1968.)

The ultimate Supreme Reality is in the nature of Consciousness, *Chit* or the Spirit. The Pure Consciousness is Shiva. Inseparable from Him is *Shakti*, His Power. *Shakti* is the active or kinetic aspect while *Shiva* is the static aspect of the Consciousness *Shiva-Shakti*. It is *Shakti* who causes duality by instilling the thought that "I am different from the Self or the *Shiva* principle." It is this *Shakti* through which *Shiva* causes creation using the 36 principles or *Tattvas* which include the five elements, the five senses, the five sense organs, the five action organs, the mind, the intellect etc. From *Shakti* issues the *Nada* the initial movement which culminates into *Shabda-Brahman* or Brahman as Sound. From *Nada* proceeds the *Bindu* or point (actually *Para Bindu* or supreme *Bindu*) which is the state of *Shakti* in which Self is identified with other

objects. When such identification is not made an object appears as extended in space but with identification the object is experienced as an unextended point or *Bindu*. Both *Nada* and *Para Bindu* are the states of *Shakti* in a mood to manifest Herself. The *Para Bindu* divides itself into three subsidiary *Bindu*s bringing forth the threefold aspects: *Karyabindu* which is of the nature of *Shiva*, *Bija* which of the nature of *Shakti* and *Nada* which is *Shiva-Shakti* which is the mutual relation between *Shiva* and *Shakti*. These three bindus form the triangle called *Kamakalaa*, the Divine desire for Manifestation. Thus *Nada*, *Bindu* and *Kalaa* are the states of *Shakti* to manifest Herself. Hence *Nada-Bindu-Kalaa* should mean manifestation of *Shakti* as the material world.

4. ***NOTE for verses*** (6:302-306). There are four types of sounds - **Vaikhari, Madhyama, Pashyanti** and **Para**. Vaikhari sound is the audible sound we hear as words. **Madhyama** cannot be heard but its meaning can be understood subconsciously. **Pashyanti** and Para are still more subtle sounds which common persons cannot hear. In this connection this is what the Nath Panthis say: We have to work continuously for guiding people as per their directive messages from sages like Vyasa etc. who guide the universe by passing divine instructions. The first vibrations generated from the nothingness (i.e. the Brahman) make their first appearance in the consciousness of the Naths. This is in the Para state (of communication). Avadhuts (i.e. yogis who have reached perfection) hear the messages in the Pashyanti state. They receive the vibrations from Naths. Kriyasiddhas (i.e. advanced yogis who are supposed to do actions) receive the messages in **Madhyama** state, Their task is to pass these messages

to different spiritual authorities as per their status. The last state is **Vaikhari** where the instructions are given a voice and the advice is communicated to public through discourses etc. The aim of a Nath Panthi is to help people without caring about his own personal liberation. Because of the compassion for all the living, he takes birth again and again anywhere on the earth in all communities and not necessarily as an ordained a Nath Panthi during that birth.

Tanmatra is the subtle form of a word or sound before it is expressed. Half tanmatra is the still more subtle form.

CHAPTER 7

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE, WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE

Shri Krishna said, “Arjuna, you have now understood what yoga is. Now I shall tell you about Knowledge (of the Brahman) and the worldly knowledge. You may perhaps wonder about the relevance of worldly knowledge here. But it is necessary to know about it first because when Knowledge is experienced the intellect puts the worldly knowledge behind. (7:1-4)

"Arjuna, Knowledge is that where the intellect cannot enter, where thoughts stop, and logic does not work. Worldly knowledge is different from this. And

ignorance is to think that worldly knowledge is the true Knowledge i.e. Knowledge of the Brahman. Now I shall tell you the method by which ignorance will disappear, worldly knowledge will burn itself leaving nothing behind and Knowledge will be apparent. (7:5-7). Only one in a thousand longs for this Knowledge and even among those it is rare that somebody will know Me. (7:10). There are millions of people who jump in the floodwaters of desire for Knowledge of the Brahman but rare is he who manages to swim across to the other bank. Therefore this is no ordinary matter. It is very deep and very difficult to explain but I shall try to explain it to you.(7:13-14).

PRAKRITI

Arjuna, just as our body casts a shadow, this material universe is my projection *Maya* manifesting itself through the principles like *Mahat* etc. It is also known as *Prakriti*. It consists of eight parts and is the one that creates the three worlds. The eight parts are: the five elements earth, water, air, fire and sky, the mind, the intellect and the ego. (7:15-18).

The state of equilibrium of these eight parts is my basic, subtle or *Para Prakriti*. It is also known as the *Jiva* (individual being). It makes the inert active, is the principle of action in the life-force, and makes the mind feel sorrow and temptation. The capability of the intellect to know is due to association with it. The ego which originates because of it runs the affairs of the world with its support. (7:19-21)

CREATION OF LIFE

When this subtle*Prakriti* lovingly creates the gross *Prakriti* it gives birth to the living beings in the world. Four types of life are produced (*Jaaraja* or born through uterus, *Andaja* or born through eggs, *Swedaja* or from sweat e.g. lice etc., and *Udbija* or born through seeds i.e. plants.) Though all these are of equally important they belong to different species. There are 8.4 million of such species and their number in each is countless. (7:22-24).

The *Prakriti* (Nature) produces lives in each species with the help of the five elements and controls their population. Nature makes them to be born, to live in the world and then causes them to die and return to the five elements. In this process it demonstrates the working of actions and non-actions by the creatures. (7:25-26). Though it is the Nature which creates this expanse of the material world, it is in reality My projection and therefore I am the beginning, middle and the end of this world. (7:28).

Just as the root cause of mirage is the Sun similarly when this visible universe has dissolved and reached the original state, that original state is only Me. Thus whatever is created and destroyed is in Me and I support it from inside and outside. (7:29-32).

Therefore Arjuna, understand that the liquid principle of water, the feeling of touch of the wind, the light of the sun and moon is Me. The natural fragrance of earth is Me, the sound from the sky is Me and the Sound of **Aum** from the Vedas is also Me. The virility in man is Me, the essence of the ego is Me. (7:33-35). The basic energy in the fire is Me. There are different kinds of living creatures in this world who survive on different

kinds of food and I exist inseparably in the means for their survival. (7:36-39).

That which expands with the sprouting of the space (Sky) at the time of the creation of the Universe and swallows the sounds A, U and M comprising the *AUM* at the time of its annihilation; that which does not vanish even after the form of the Universe, which had remained apparent as long as it existed, vanishes at the time of the final annihilation, that formless entity, that self generated seed of the Universe is Me. I am giving this knowledge to you. You will realise its relevance when you ponder over it deeply and compare it with the Sankhya philosophy. (7:40-43). Now I shall explain this knowledge to you in short. (7:44)

I AM EVERYTHING

The penance of the ascetics is My form only. Understand without doubt that I am the strength of the strong and the intellect in the intelligent. (7:44-45). I am the desire in all creatures by virtue of which the prescribed behaviour (*Dharma*) and earning the livelihood are possible. Though this desire is controlled by the sense organs it does not let them go against the prescribed code (*Dharma*). Whenever the desire is not tending towards the prohibited actions it is guided by the self-restraint. Because of this the prescribed actions come to a successful conclusion and a worldly person achieves liberation. (7:46-49). How many things like this should I tell you? All this expanse of the material world has been rooted in Me. (7:51)

MAYA CREATED BY ME BUT VEILS ME

The feelings of the mind, having the three attributes *Sattva* (pure), *Raja* (passion) and *Tama* (sloth) have been created from me but even so I am not in them. (7:53- 54). [Simile: seed gives rise to a tree and then to wood, but this seed is not in the wood]. (7:55- 56). But this Nature or Maya which is my projection and has been created from Me, veils Me. Therefore creatures do not realise Me even though they have been created from Me. Just as pearls formed from water do not dissolve in it similarly all living creatures are My own parts and have acquired life due to Maya but though they have been created from Me, instead of becoming one with me they get blinded by desires due to selfishness. (7:63-67)

GOING BEYOND MAYA

Arjuna, the problem is how to go beyond this Maya of mine and realise Me. (7:68). Whatever steps one takes to cross this river of Maya become harmful. (7:82). Those who try to cross it on the strength of their intellect get lost. Those who try to cross using knowledge are completely swallowed by pride. Those who take the help of the Vedas are burdened by the ego and are consumed by arrogance. (7:83-84). Those who tried to use their youthful strength were caught in the sexual lust and eventually, becoming old and demented, died sad and frustrated. (7:85-88) Those who perform Yajnas get trapped in the wedge of heavenly enjoyment. (7:89) Those who, desiring liberation, perform ritualistic actions get caught in the issues of right and wrong. (7:90). To say that detachment and discrimination are not sufficient and even all round yoga practice also is rarely useful for crossing this River of Maya, is like saying that a sick person who

neglects to observe diet will get cured. (7:91-92). A person cannot cross this river of Maya by his own efforts. (7:96). Only those who are single-mindedly devoted to Me can cross it. Actually they do not even have to cross it because they have rid themselves of the illusion of Maya even before they die. (7:97)

Those who are guided by a *True* Guru, who hold on to their experiences and have taken the route to Self-realisation, those who by shedding the ego, calming the mind, avoiding desires followed the path of knowledge for ease in attaining unity with the Brahman, leap towards liberation and attain it with the strength of detachment and with the conviction "I am that". But such devotees are very rare. (7:98-102). Except for that one devotee all others are affected by ego and therefore they forget the Self. They remain unaware of their lack of religious observances, are not ashamed of impending degradation and develop the tendency to do what Vedas forbid. (7:103-104)

Arjuna, they get engrossed in sense-pleasures totally forsaking the purpose of their rebirth and are full of passions with feelings of "I" and "mine". There is no realisation even when they get hit by pain and sorrow because their minds are clouded by the effect of Maya. Because of this they missed attaining Me. (7:105-107)

FOUR TYPES OF DEVOTEES

The devotees who gained spiritually from their devotion to Me may be divided into four types. Arta (distressed), Jijnasu (curious), Artharthi (desirous of wealth) and Jnani (enlightened). (7:108-109).

Arta becomes my devotee because of his desire to be rid of his distress. Jijnasu worships me because he wants to know about me out of an intellectual curiosity. The reason for which the third i.e. Artharthi type worships me is obvious, it is for wealth. But it is fourth type, i.e. Jnani who is my real devotee, for he wants nothing but Me for My own sake. He, by the light of his knowledge has destroyed the darkness of duality between him and Me and achieved oneness with me and even then wishes to remain my devotee. (7:110-112). From his external actions he appears to be my devotee but internally he has become Me and in the light of this knowledge he knows that I am his soul. Therefore feeling satisfied, I too consider him as My soul. How can he who lives realising the signs beyond life be different from Me even when he is in body? (7:113, 114, 116-118). I like a devotee who comes to Me with selfish motives but the devotee I really love is the Jnani type. (7:119). He is nothing but my soul. (7:126).

MY BEST DEVOTEE

Avoiding the obstacles of desire and anger in the wilderness of sense-pleasures he acquires good tendencies and in the company of saintly people he avoids bad behaviour and treads the straight path of righteous actions. How can one who, desireless of fruits of his actions, treads the path of devotion through hundreds of lifetimes bother about the goal of those actions? (7:127-129). As he travels alone in the darkness of possessing the body during successive rebirths, the dawn of the end of the burden of his karmas comes. (7:130). Now the morning light of the benevolence of the True Guru removes the darkness of

ignorance, and with the bright illumination from the rays of Knowledge he realises the wealth of equality. (7:131). Wherever he casts his eyes he sees only Me and nothing but Me. Just as water is within and without a vessel dipped in it, so is he within Me and I within him and outside him also. But all this cannot be expressed in words. (7:131-134). Great soul like this is rare (7:137).

WORSHIP WITH INTENT

Rest of them worship Me only for pleasures and get blinded by desires. (7:138). And lust enters the heart once they are possessed by the desire for the fruit of their actions, extinguishing the light of Knowledge. Thus, remaining internally and externally in the darkness of ignorance, they are distanced from Me and start worshipping other deities with all their heart. (7:139-140). Having already become slaves of Maya and overcome by lust they worship other deities with elaborate rituals paying elaborate attention to the rules, means and offerings. (7:141-142). But it is only I who fulfils the desire of the devotee worshipping these deities, because I am present in all the deities. However, he does not believe so and therefore he keeps different feelings towards the various deities. (7:143-144). Such devotees do not know Me because they do not come out of their narrow thinking. Though their desires are fulfilled, the fruits of their efforts are impermanent like a dream and only help the continuation of their life cycles. They reach the realm of the deities whom they worship (and the deities are also impermanent). On the other hand, those who choose the path of My devotion with their body and mind alone attain on death, oneness with Me who is

eternal. (7:147-150). But common man does not do so and put himself to loss. (7:151). Why should ne not leave the cage of desire of fruits and fly high on the wings of
Self-realisation in the sky of Knowledge? Why should he try to measure the immeasurably bliss of the Self? Why should he consider the formless, unmanifestable Me as manifestable and having form? Why should he try to create rituals for reaching me when I am in all creatures? (7:155-157). Even though I am in the form of light, people are not able to see me because of the I-am-the-body feeling since they are blinded by the veil of Maya. Otherwise, tell me, is there anything in which I am not present? I alone am pervading the entire universe. (7:158-160). Arjuna, I was in all the creatures who ever lived; and at this moment I am in all creatures who are living and I am not separate from those who will be born in the future. But this is only in a manner of speaking. Actually nothing is born and nothing dies. (7:161-162). All life is illusion. Thus, though I am eternally in all, yet they are still caught in the birth and death cycles. But there is a reason for it. (7:165)

PITFALLS FROM DESIRE

Desire was born out of ego and body. Due to its combination with hate the delusion that one is different from soul was born. This delusion was fostered by the ego. Shunning courage and self-control this delusion started growing due to hope. Under the influence of dissatisfaction it got tirelessly engrossed in sense-pleasures and started behaving perversely. It brought impediments in the path of devotion and paved the paths of evil deeds. Because of it people got confused,

went astray in life and came under the heavy burden of sorrow. (7:166-171)

But those who are aware of the useless thorns of doubts and do not get caught in the trap of delusion produced by them, who tread the path of unstinted devotion, crush the doubts, avoid sinful actions and with the speed attained through meritorious actions come near Me and thus escape the clutches of desire and anger. (7:171-174). Then they develop a desire to end this saga of birth and death. Sometime or other they succeed in their efforts and attain the perfect Brahman. Having reached their goal and once the novelty of this Self-realisation fades away they find the world full of bliss, gain peace of mind and there is no more need for actions. They then develop a sense of equality and attain unity with Me. (7:175-179).

Experiencing the aspect of My supremacy over the elements they reach My aspect of Adhibhuta (Supreme deity). When, with the impetus of their Knowledge they look at Me as the Supreme deity of the sacrifices or the Supreme Soul they do not grieve death. Otherwise, when death approaches, people feel that a big calamity is about to fall. But nobody knows how, those who have become one with me do not leave me even when they die. Those who have gained this perfect Knowledge are the real yogis. (7:180-184).

CHAPTER 8

THE IMPERISHABLE ABSOLUTE

WHAT IS *ADIBHUTA, ADHIDAIVATA* ETC.

Arjuna said, "Shri Krishna, please clarify as to what is *Brahman, Karma* and *Adhyatma*. Also explain to me what is *Adhibhuta* and *Adhidaivat*. I am not able to understand what *Adhiyajna* is and what he is in the body. Also tell me how those who have attained control over the mind can know you at the time of their death. (8:1-5)

Shri Krishna replied as follows,

Brahman That which, in spite of being contained in the porous body does not leak out, that which is subtle but not non-existent, that which has been strained through the fabric of the sky and which, though rare and thin does not fall through the bag of the material world is the ultimate *Brahman* (*Parabrahman*). (8:15-17)

Adhyatma The natural state of the principle of the Brahman which takes form but is not created and even after losing it is not destroyed is called *Adhyatma* or Supreme Soul. (8:18-19)

Karma From that formless Brahman different elements like *Mahat, Prakriti*, Ego etc. are created and the formation of the Primeval Egg (*Brahmanda*) begins. Because of the Primeval thought the Primeval Egg gives rise to countless life species. But though they appear different the limitless Brahman only pervades in all of them. It is found that Brahman alone is the root of all these millions of species. One cannot find who created the world and why it was created but its affairs go on. But the process of creation of this world

continues growing. Thus, the action of creation without creator attributed to the Brahman is called *Karma*. (8:21-29)

Adhibhuta Now listen to what *Adhibhuta* is. That which is formed from one fifth part of each of the five principles (Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Sky or Space, *See note at the end of Ch. V*), and which can be sensed because of the five principles but is destroyed as soon as it is separated from them is called *Adhibhuta* or Supreme Spirit. (8:30- 32).

Adhidaivata*Adhidaivata* is a living person. He enjoys whatever is created by *Prakriti* (nature). He is the eye of the consciousness, master of the organs, and one by whose association, the thoughts, desires etc. continue to live after the body dies. He is actually the ultimate Self but due to ego, he gets trapped in the struggle in life and experiences happiness, sorrow etc. Ordinarily understood as living being it may called *Adhidaivata* (Supreme Being) of the body made of the five principles. (8:33-36)

Adhiyajnya **(Principle Sacrifice)** One who extinguishes the I-am-the-body feeling is the *Adhiyajnya* (Principle Sacrifice) in the body. Secondly, I am both *Adhibhuta* and *Adhidaivata,* but just as pure gold mixed with impurity has to be called impure as long as it is associated with the impurity, this *Adhibhuta* etc. , as long as they are veiled by ignorance must be considered different from the Supreme Brahman. Otherwise they are not different. (8:37-41). When the I-am-the-body feeling vanishes, the original unity with the Brahman becomes evident. Where this happens, that *Adhiyajnya* is Me. (8:45) It was by keeping this in

mind that I had told you earlier (Ch IV) that all yajnas are created through actions. I am opening to you the wealth of liberation where all living things ultimately come to rest. Avoid sense-pleasures by control of the senses with dispassionate attitude. Then attain knowledge by means of the yoga technique using *Vajrasana*, breath and mind control. Once Knowledge merges into the subject of Knowledge only the subject that is Brahman remains. That subject is called *Adhiyajnya*. (8:46-53). As I told you just now, those who know Me as *Adhiyajnya* from beginning to the end consider the body to be a mere cover and dwell in the Self. Such a person does not have awareness about external matters. He who thus becomes one with Me from outside as well as inside, sheds the layers of the five principles from his body automatically. He who is not aware of his body even while living does not feel grief from death. A vessel immersed in water has water inside as well as outside. Does water break if the vessel breaks? Similarly even if body gets destroyed, Brahman continues to be everywhere and therefore how can the intellect which has become one with it get destroyed? Therefore those who remember me at the time of death become one with me. (8:59-68)

STATE AFTER DEATH

The normal rule is that after death a person attains that state which is in his mind at the time of death. He cannot avoid it. Just as one dreams of things which are constantly in the mind while awake, whatever one longs for in life comes to the mind at the time of death and he attains that state. Therefore make a habit of always remembering Me. Consider that whatever you hear, think, see, speak is Me throughout, then I am always

with you. I assure you that if you offer your mind and intellect to Me then you will attain only Me. If you any doubts about this then experience it by practising it. (8:69-80)

Purify your conscious mind by this practice and lead it to the spiritual path. If the mind which takes one here and there gets engrossed in the who cares or remembers whether the body exists or not? The mind merges with Consciousness which is solid bliss. (8:81-85)

ATTAINMENT OF BRAHMAN BY YOGA

With the knowledge that the faultless Brahman is formless and without birth and death, that It witnesses all, is older than the sky and subtler than the atom, that the affairs of the world go on by association with It, that It gives birth to all the visible world, that the world lives by It, that It is beyond logic and beyond imagination, that eyes cannot see It even in broad daylight, that like a sunbeam It always appears lustrous to men of Knowledge, that It never sets, he (a person of Self-realisation) who concentrates on It with steady mind at the time of death while outwardly, sitting in the lotus position facing north, with the eternal bliss gained by practising desireless actions (*Karmayoga*), with the love of Self-realisation and using the yogic techniques mastered for attaining it quickly, he brings the life-force (*Prana*) from the centre (*Chakra*) of fire or energy (i.e. *Manipur Chakra* near the navel) through the central nerve i.e. the *Sushumna* route to the *Brahmarandhra* or aperture on the crown, where the life-force merges with the sky-principle. The immobile mind and the life force appear outwardly to have merged. But because the mind has become stable and devotion steady, and with

the strength of the yogic power, that life-force eliminates the movable; and then the immovable enters the centre of the eyebrows and vanishes there. Just as the sound of a bell vanishes in the bell itself the devotee leaves his body and merges into pure Brahman which is my lustrous form. (8:86-99).

AKSHAR AND *KSHAR*

It (the Brahman) has been called *Akshar* i.e. immutable or indestructible by knowers of the highest knowledge which is the knowledge of the Self. That which men of Knowledge sense and measure by their senses is *Kshar* or mutable. That which is impossible to know is *Akshar*. It is the same as the highest Soul and is above. (8:102-103). Only dispassionate persons who have given up sense-pleasures by control of the senses attain that state which the desireless covet. (8:104-105).

CONCENTRATING ON *AUM* AT DEATH-TIME

Arjuna, make the mind steady in the heart by breaking the habit of the mind to wander. But this is possible only when the senses are controlled with determination. (8:111-113). After the mind becomes steady one should meditate on *Aum* and bring the life-force (*Prana*) to the *Brahmarandhra*. Then by concentrating it should be brought to the boundary of consciousness. Then when the *A, U* and *Ma* merge in the half syllable *Ma* it should be made steady in the Consciousness. The uttering of *Aum* then stops and life-force also dissolves in the Consciousness, but the bliss that is Brahman remains. Aum is my monosyllable form. He who dies while meditating on it undoubtedly reaches Me and there is nothing more for him to be attained after that. (8:114-119).

I AM SERVANT OF DEVOTEES

Arjuna, you may perhaps doubt how one should remember Me at the time of death when the senses are under its shadow and the joy of living is lost. When the signs of death are evident, how one can sit up, control the senses and how one can recite Aum in that state of mind. Do not let such doubts trouble you, for one who serves Me constantly, I become his servant at the time of his death. (8:120-123). Such persons give up sense-pleasures, control their active life and keeping Me in the heart they experience the joy of the Self and thus worship Me by being constantly engrossed in Me and close to Me. Were I to come to my devotees only if they remember me at the time of their death, then of what use is their worship? Do I not rush to any person who prays for my help in their distress purely out of compassion? But if I were to wait until my devotees also to pray before I go to them then who would like to be a devotee? I must rush to them the moment they remember Me otherwise I will not be able to bear the burden of their devotion. It is for this reason, that is to pay the debt of their devotion that I go to the devotees to serve them at the time of death. In order that weakness of their bodies does not cause them distress, I keep them bound to the state of Self-realisation, make their mind calm and steady and thus bring those dear ones to Me. (8:124- 134). The devotees also are not sorry to leave their body because they do not have attachment for it. Also, they do not feel that at the time of death I should come to them to take them to Me because they have already become one with Me while they are still alive. (8:136-137). Those who have attained this infinite Me are not reborn. (8:151).

EVEN GODS CANNOT AVOID LIFE CYCLES

On the other hand, even Brahma, who is proud of his Brahmahood cannot escape the life-death cycles. (8:152). Brahmadeo's one day lasts for one thousand sets of the four yugas with a similar span for his night. (*See the note on reckoning of time at the end of the chapter*). The fortunate persons who dwell in this *loka* (plane) of Brahmadeo do not return to earth but remain permanently in heaven. Ordinary deities are nothing compared with them. Even their king Indra does not have a life span of even one *Prahara* (3 hours) out of one day of *Brahmaloka*, the best of the fourteen lokas. During the length of one day of *Brahmaloka*, fourteen Indras come and go. (8:156-158).

When the day dawns in *Brahmaloka*, the formless Brahman gives birth to the material Universe. (8:160). After four *Praharas*, Brahmadeo's night starts and the expanse of the universe suddenly vanishes and again starts as before at dawn. (8:161). Thus in one day and night of Brahmadeo, the universe is created and destroyed. The vastness of this *Brahmaloka* is such that the seed of this universe is contained in it but even then it is caught in the cycle of life and death. (8:165-166).

BRAHMAN IS MY HIGHEST ABODE

Thus the diversity of the universe is contained in the uniqueness of the unmanifestable. This property is called equality. (8:169). In this state of equality one cannot see similarity or dissimilarity therefore the five elements are not manifested. Once the form dissolves then the worldness of the world vanishes but that from which the world is created remains as it was and is known by the natural name unmanifestable. One is

suggested from the other but they are not two different things. (8:170-172). Both the manifestable and unmanifestable attributes occur in Brahman alone. But Brahman is neither manifestable nor unmanifestable. It is neither eternal nor destructible. It is beyond these two attributes and is axiomatic. (8:174-175). The name *Akshar* itself signifies its indestructibility. It is called the ultimate state (*Paramagati*) since there is nothing beyond it. But it appears as if it is dormant in this body because it does not do actions nor cause them to be done, but in spite of this no function of the body stops. (8:181-183). The affairs of the body like the awareness of the intellect, transactions of the mind, plays of the organs and movement of the life-force continue nicely without its doing anything. (8:186-187).

Since it (*Akshar*) dwells quietly in the body it is known as *Purusha* (Supreme Being or Soul). Since it is loyal to *Prakriti* also it is called *Purusha*. (8:188-189). It is all encompassing and is called by superior yogis as the Supreme Being beyond ego (*Paraatpar*). It comes searching for the true devotees and rewards them for their devotion. (8:190-191). It is the dwelling place of those who believe that the universe is the form of Brahman, it is the place of glory for the ego-less and knowledge to those beyond attributes, kingdom of happiness for the desireless, food served for the contented and protector like a mother to those devotees who do not bother about worldly problems. The path of devotion is the direct approach to It. (8:192-195). There is no rebirth after Self-realisation. It is my highest abode. I am revealing this secret to you. (8:202-203).

AUSPICIOUS DEATH TIME FOR YOGIS

There is another way of understanding easily the abode where yogis go after leaving their body. If a yogi has to leave his body accidentally then he has to take rebirth. If a yogi leaves his body at an auspicious time then the yogi attains Brahman immediately but if the time is improper then he has to take rebirth. Union with Brahman and rebirth depend upon the time of death. Listen to what those times are. (8:204-207).

At the moment of death the five elements from which the body is formed leave it. When death is near his intellect is not clouded, memory does not become blind and mind also does not die. On the other hand because of the protection by the experience of the Brahman all the organs remain bright and this brightness lasts until death. But for this to happen it is necessary that the fire principle (heat) is active in the body. (8:208-211). At the time of death, because of aggravation by the harmful airs, the body is filled by phlegm throughout and the intensity of fire in it is destroyed. At such a time there is no vigour in the life-force, then what can intellect do? Therefore without fire (heat) the power of action (*Chetana*) in the body does not survive and the body is like a lump of mud. If a seeker dies under these conditions then he spends the remaining time of his life in darkness. (8:213-215). In this state how is it possible for him to remember his past spiritual progress at the time of death and attain Self? Due to the extinguishing of the power of action in the mire of phlegm he loses his memory and his past spiritual achievements become ineffective prior to death. In short, the basic support for knowledge is the fire-principle therefore its strength must be plentiful at the time of death. (8:216-219).

The factors favourable for yogis to leave the body in order to attain Brahman are internally the strength of the fire principle within the body and externally the bright fortnights during the six months of the northward passage of the sun (Uttarayana) and daytime. (*See the note on reckoning of time at the end of the chapter*). Knowers of Brahman who leave their body under these favourable conditions become the Supreme Brahman themselves. Arjuna, this is the greatness of the path of yoga which is the straightforward path to liberation. The first step in this path is the fire (heat) in the body, the second is the flame of the fire, the third is the time of the day, the fourth is the bright fortnight and the fifth and the last is the six month period of the northward passage of the sun. This is the best condition and is called *Archira Marg*. (8:220-225).

INAUSPICIOUS DEATH TIME FOR YOGIS

Now I shall tell you about which are the inauspicious times for death. When death approaches, the wind and phlegm in the body get aggravated, darkness spreads in the subtle mind, organs become lethargic, memory gets confused, mind becomes disturbed and life force feels constrained. The fire principle becomes inactive and consciousness of the body becomes engulfed in smoke. (8:225-228). He is neither dead nor in his senses because the life-force is weakened. His body lies motionless waiting for death. Thus the mind, intellect and body get suffocated by the smoke and all his efforts for liberation get wasted. (8:230-231). This internal state of the body together with the external conditions: dark fortnight, night-time and the months during the southward passage of the sun can only lead to rebirth. A yogi who dies under these conditions, because he is a

yogi goes to *Chandraloka* (Moon plane) and is reborn after some time. (8:232-235). This is the smoky path to rebirth. (8:236). On the other hand *Archira Path* is the best, easy, pleasant and leads to liberation. (8:237)

BETTER ATTAIN BRAHMAN WHILE LIVING

I have told you about these two paths which have been existing from ancient times so that you can benefit from their knowledge. (8:238-239). If a person misses the *Archira* path and falls in the trap of the smoky path then he has to go through the painful stages of rebirth. I had to explain the two paths to you so that the pains of rebirth can be avoided. But whatever falls to his fate is his real path. (8:244-246). Who can tell which path a person will get? Why should there be any path at all to attain Brahman after death? Whether one is dead or alive one is in reality Brahman only. (8:247-248). Those who attained Brahman while still in the body do not bother about the body or when it is going to die. Why do they have to bother about whether the path is good or bad. (8:251-252). Therefore Arjuna, be equipped with Yoga so that you attain Brahman. Then it does not matter when and where you shed your body, the unification with Brahman will be eternal. (8:256-257)

MERIT INFERIOR TO BRAHMAN

One cannot compare pure Brahman with the merit gained through study of Vedas, performance of yajnas and by donations. (8:261-262). When a great yogi compares the heavenly pleasures with the bliss of the Brahman he finds the former to be inferior compared with the latter. Then, he steps up from the heavenly pleasures to the level of the Brahman. (8:266-267).

Note on reckoning of time: (8:156-158). In the Indian system of reckoning time, following units are used (Source: Sulabha Jyotishashastra by K. V. Somanshastri. Pub by Mouj Prakashan, Mumbai 4)

Small time scales:

One Nimisha = time taken for one blinking of the eye of a person whose mind is calm. **1 Tatpar** = 1/30 Nimisha.

1 Truti = 1/100 Tatpar. **1 Lagna** = 1/1000 Truti. **1 Kalaa** = 4 Nimisha. **1 Kashtaa** = 18 Nimisha.

1 Kalaa = 30 Kashtaa

Medium time scales:

1 Ghatika = 30 Kalaa (= 24 minutes) = 60 **Pala**. (also 2.5 **Vipalas** = 1 second)

1 day and night = 60 Ghatika

Prahar = A day and night consists of 8 Prahars, four during the day and four during the night. But night is said to have only three Prahars since the half Prahars after sunset and before sunrise are counted as daytime.

1 day = the time period from sunrise to sunset. **1 night** = the time from sunset to sunrise.

Ahoratra = 1day + 1 night i. e. time between successive sunrises. (Note that in modern calendar the day or date is deemed to start from midnight and not from sunrise.)

Paksha = a period of about a fortnight, from the end of new moon day (*Amavasya*) to end of full moon day or *Purnima*. (This is *Shukla* or bright *Paksha*), and from the end of full moon day to the end of new moon day (*Krishna* or dark *Paksha*).

Tithi = *Tithi* is the most important indication of time for all socio-religious events in the Hindu world. The time taken by moon to advance 12 degrees farther from the sun constitutes one *tithi*. Sun and moon are at the

same place in the sky on *Amavasya* night, the night before new moon day. The moon travels faster in the sky and again joins the sun a month later. Since moon has to travel 360 degrees of the celestial route every lunar month there are 30 spans of 12 degrees and therefore 30 *tithis* in a lunar month, 15 in each *Paksha*. These are named as *Pratipadaa* (First), *Dwitiyaa* (Second) etc. up to *Chaturdashi* (Fourteenth) in each of the bright and dark *Pakshas*. The fifteenth *tithi* is either *Purnima* (with night of Full Moon) or *Amavasya* (night of no Moon). *Tithi* may change any time during the day or night but whichever is present at the time of sunrise is taken as *tithi* of the day. Due to the changes in the rates of motion of the sun and the moon, sometimes the 12 degree span corresponding to a given *tithi* is covered in between the successive sunrises. In such a case corresponding tithi lapses. For example let us say that on Monday the tithi at sunrise was Third but *tithi* changed to Fourth just after sunrise and again to Fifth just before the sunrise of Tuesday. Thus Tuesday *tithi* will be Fifth, fourth having lapsed. On the other hand if on any day the tithi does not change before the next sunrise then the same *tithi* will continue the next day.

Long time scales:

1 lunar month = Two Pakshas. It is the time lapsed between the two successive new moon days. First day (*Pratipadaa*) of the month starts on the day next to the new moon day and the last day is on the next new moon day. A lunar month is 29. 53 days long. There are twelve months in a year: *Chaitra, Vaishakha, Jyeshtha, Ashadha, Shravana, Bhadrapada, Ashwin, Kartik, Margashirsha, Pousha, Magha, Falguna.*

1 Lunar year = 12 lunar months or 360 *tithis* but actually 350 days since many *tithis* lapse. There is an

additional leap month every third year and a lapsed month every 141st year. This brings the lunar year numbering in phase with the solar years. Thus every third year has thirteen months. Each year has a name, one of a list of sixty, which are repeated. There are two main eras used in India: *Shalivahan Shaka* or era and *Vikramasamvat*. *Shalivahan Shaka* started 78 years after the Christian era, the year starting in *Chaitra*. Vikramasamvat started 57 years *earlier* to the Christian era, the year starting in *Kartik*. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas also started an era but it is not used any more.

Nakshatra: The zodiac is divided into 27 parts each named after a star constellation or *nakshatra*. A reference to time is often given by the sun's position in a particular *nakshatra*. The 27 *Nakshatras* are: *Ashwini, Bharani, Krittikaa, Rohini, Mrigashirsha, Ardraa, Punarvasu, Pushya, Ashleshaa, Maghaa, Purvaa(-falguni), Uttara(-falguni), Hasta, Chitraa, Swaati, Vishaakhaa, Anuraadhaa, Jyeshthaa, Mula, Purvashadhaa, Uttarashadhaa, Shravana, Dhanishthaa, Shatataarakaa, Purvaabhdrapadaa, Uttaraabhaadrapadaa, Revati*. Sun remains in each *nakshatra* for about 13. 5 days while moon stays for about a day in each *nakshatra* each month.

Solar year is taken as the time the sun takes to travel from the beginning of the *Ashwini* nakshatra (which is in the Aries zodiac sign) to the time it returns to it. However during Shri Krishna's time the year started in Margashirsha in December.

Uttarayana and Dakshinayana: These mean the northward and southward passage of the sun respectively. Due to the inclination if earth's axis of rotation to the plane of its orbit round the sun, the place where it rises shifts every day. On December 21st it is

in the southernmost position and starts shifting northwards i. e. the *Uttarayana* starts on December 21st. It reaches the northernmost position six months later on June 21st when the southward journey or *Dakshinayana* starts. Yogis consider Uttarayana period as auspicious for leaving their body.

Imaginary long term time scales of Puranas:

The Puranas give ceratain long term time scales which are widely beieved in the Hindu world but have no scientific basis and do not stand up to scientific facts. These are:

Deva day One full day of the Devas (gods) and Asuras (demons) is made up of one solar year. The *Uttarayana* period is considered as the daytime of the Devas and night-time of the Asuras and vice versa for *Dakshinayana*. These are probably the memories of the days when Aryans lived in the Arctic region. Asuras were also Aryans but due to enmity between Deva Aryans and Asura Aryans their day and night seems to have been phased oppositely.

Yuga: There are four yugas viz. Krita (or Satya), Treta, Dwapar and Kali (with supposedly decreasing moral standards), These are respectively 4, 3, 2 and 1 times 432,000 years in length i. e. 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000 and 432,000 years respectively.

1 Mahayuga = the length of the four yugas i. e. 4,320,000 years.

1 Manvantar (Period after which the reigning **Manu** the legendary chief of mankind changes to another **Manu**. There are 14 Manus stated in the Puranas) consists of 71 Mahayugas (306,720,000 solar years) . In between two Manvantars there is a intervening period equal to the length of Kritayuga during which there occurs the deluge. (Names of the 14 Manus are given later).

1 Kalpa = 14 Manvantars plus 14 intervening periods plus a fifteenth period of same length in the beginning of the Kalpa. Total length of a Kalpa in terms of solar years is 4,294,080,000 + 25,920,000 = 4,320,000,000 or 1000 Mahayugas.

Brahmadeo's day = 1 Kalpa or 1000 Mahayugas during which material world is created and destroyed in the end. This is followed by Brahmadeo's night of equal length. I. e. Brahmadeos day-night consists of 8,640,000,000 solar years.

Brahmadeo's lifespan consists of 100 years, each year being of 360 day-nights.

Names of the Manus: 1 Swayambhuva, 2 Swarichisha, 3 Uttama, 4 Taamas, 5 Raivata, 6 Chakshusha, 7 Vaivaswat, 8 Savarni, 9 Daksghasavarni, 10 Brahmasavarni,11 Dharmasavarni, 12 Rudrasavarni, 13 Ruchi, 14 Bhuti.

Currently we are supposed to be in the reign of Vaivaswat Manu and out of his reign 27 Mahayugas have already elapsed. We are in the Kaliyuga of the 28th Mahayuga. According to Suryasiddhanta the current Kaliyuga is supposed to have started on 17 February of 3102 BC. It is supposed to have started on the day Shri Krishna died. This was 36 years after the Mahabharata war. However historical studies supported by scientific data put the war to have occurred in about 1011 BC.

We can compare these numbers with what is known from scientific studies:

PARAMETER PURANAS SCIENCE

Age of the universe	1. 973 x 10^9y	Approx $14x10^9$ y
Age of the earth	Not known*	$4.6x10^9$ y
Creation of life	Not known*	$3.8x10^9$ y to 2. 5x109 y ago
Creation of man	Not known*	Hominid $5x10^6$ y ago Modern man 30,000 y ago

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* But Brahmadeo is supposed to have created them in short span of time. The term Vishwa is used both for the universe and earth in Puranas therefore there is a confusion about the context.

CHAPTER 9

SOVEREIGN KNOWLEDGE AND SOVEREIGN MYSTERY

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF AND OF WORLD

Shri Krishna said, “Arjuna, I shall once more tell you about the root of Knowledge which is the greatest secret in My heart. But you may wonder why I am

revealing My secret to you. It is because you are the sense of devotion personified and will never ignore what I tell you. Therefore I am eager that whatever is in My heart should enter your heart once for all." (9:34-37).

One may by all means tell his secrets to a devotee who is of clean mind, of pure intellect, who does not slander others and is faithful. And right now there is nobody else possessing these qualities here except you. Now I am going to tell you about Knowledge of the Self as well as knowledge of the world (i.e. material knowledge). (9:40-42). When these two types of knowledge are obtained, a seeker leaves the worldly affairs to the world and reaches the state of liberation. (9:46).

This Knowledge, which is of highest status, most secret, the peerless among the holy things, and the basis of the entire Dharma is the best among the best. Once a person gets this Knowledge he has no reason to be reborn. Once the Guru utters it, the disciple easily acquires the Knowledge of the Self already present within him. (9:47-49).

It has another quality. Once obtained it does not get lost. It does not get reduced by experiencing it. Now you may very well ask how people did not get hold of this incomparable thing so far? (9:52-53). But you need not have any doubts. (9:56). You see, though I, giver of all types of happiness, am within the hearts of all but under the influence of *Maya* (delusion) they fall prey to the worldly desires. (9:60). Due to ego, instead of crossing this stream of the worldly affairs to reach Me,

they go on shuttling between the two banks of life and death. (9:62).

If you ask what My nature is, then understand that like the Sun I am always in front of all and not like something which appears now and disappears sometime later. If you ask My expanse, then understand that this whole universe is Me alone, like a tree growing out of a seed. My formless unmanifestable form has taken shape in the form of this universe. Though I am formless, I take form and create this expanse of the three worlds. (9:63-66). All the principles starting from *Mahat* to the body are really created from Me but even so I am not in those principles as I have explained earlier. (9:67, 69).

EVERYTHING IS ME

If you see My form beyond *Maya* without using your imagination then you will realise that My statement that all principles are in Me is false because everything is Me. Thought creates a twilight zone between the ignorance and knowledge. In this twilight zone, the intellect becomes dim and in that dim light, even though I am undivided from everything I appear to be separate from the beings. But once the twilight of thought vanishes then it becomes clear that I am undivided from the beings. (9:71-73). He who imagines beings to be within Me has those beings only in his imagination, but when the *Maya* which is responsible for the thoughts dissolves, the false existence of the beings also vanishes and what remains is My pure form. (9:79-80). Thought causes illusion of the five elements in undivided Brahman but if the thought is abandoned then one cannot imagine even in a

dream that the elements are in Me and I am in the elements. Therefore, to say that I support the elements or that I am in the elements is like talking in a delirium caused by the fever of thoughts. (9:81-83). Therefore Arjuna, the ideas that I am the soul of this universe or I am the support of all creatures are false. It is like the mirage caused by the sun's rays. But just as the sun and its brightness are the same I am also not different from the elements. Did you understand this Divine scheme? Therefore the creatures are not different from Me and I am also not different from them. (9:84-88).

The air appears to be different from the space which contains it only if it moves, otherwise it appears to be same as space. Similarly if one imagines that creatures are in Me then it appears to be so but in thoughtless state (Nirvikalpa) of samadhi this illusion vanishes and it becomes apparent that everywhere it is only Me. Existence or otherwise of the beings is due to the imagining about them and once this imagination which originates in ignorance vanishes they also vanish. Therefore understand carefully this Divine scheme. Be a wave in this ocean of Self- realisation and then you will realise that what is pervading this living and nonliving universe is only you. (9:89-93).

Arjuna, has the dream of dualism which you were having vanished? In order that you should not get it again you should follow the path of pure Knowledge of the Brahman which I am going to explain to you. (9:94-96).

I CREATE EVERYTHING THROUGH *MAYA*

Arjuna, keep in mind that it is only *Maya* which does the creation as well as destruction of all creatures.

(9:97). This *Maya* is also known by the name *Prakriti*. I have already told you that it is of two kinds. (See 7:15) One of them manifests itself in eight forms (Earth, water, air, fire, sky, mind, intellect and ego) and the second is in the form of life. At the time of the great deluge all elements dissolve in *Prakriti* in unmanifestable form. (9:98-100). At the end of the deluge all that is created by *Prakriti* returns to it. (9:103). Listen to the explanation of the legend about My creating the universe again. (9:105).

When I establish this *Prakriti* it assumes the form of the universe made up of the five elements. (9:106-107). When I establish it, it is like a person waking up from a dream into the wakeful state. Just as when a king builds a city he himself does not have to do anything, similarly when this universe is created I do not have to do anything. (9:110-111). Once I establish *Prakriti*, the life-forms in the universe develop automatically by its support in the same way as plant-forms sprout and grow from the seeds with the help of the earth. (9:117-118). All life is thus controlled by *Prakriti*, therefore the responsibility for creation of life and its support is not mine. These actions are removed from Me though they originate in Me. How can the actions which ultimately merge in Me bind Me? (9:122-124). Though the material world created by *Prakriti* has My support I am indifferent to all that and I neither do those actions (of creation etc.) nor cause them to be done. (9:126-127). Though I am in all creatures I have no connection with their actions. (9:129).

This living and non-living universe is created by Me only through the establishment of *Prakriti* therefore with this logic I am the cause of its creation. (9:132).

Therefore understand in the light of Knowledge the Divine principle that all living things are in Me but I am not in them or (going still further), all living things are not in Me and I am not in them. Do not forget this fundamental thing which is My most guarded secret which you should enjoy through Meditation after shutting of your sense-organs. Nobody can understand My true nature unless this is understood. Normally, it is thought that this principle is understood through logic but it is useless unless it is experienced. (9:133-137). People speak about Self-realisation without experiencing it but it becomes clear that it was not so and they miss it. (9:139). If you are afraid of this world and you really desire Me then you remember this fundamental thing. (9:140).

DELUSION THAT I HAVE FORM

Some people consider Me as a human being. Those who see Me with gross (materialistic) eyes do not really know Me but these ignorant people confidently say they do. It is their shallow knowledge that comes in the way of real knowledge. (9:142-145).

Those who got entangled in the worldly affairs with strong determination to seek Me are like a person trying to reach the reflection of the moon in water rather than the real moon or like a person who drinks rice water and expects the effects of nectar. (9:150-151).

Because of delusion they consider Me a human being and think that the laws of birth and death apply to Me. Thus they assign a name to Me who is nameless; attribute actions to Me who is actionless; bodily functions to Me who is without body; they imagine a form for Me when I am formless; social behaviour by

Me who is beyond all rules of conduct; a caste to the casteless, attributes to one without attributes, limbs to one without any, a measure to the immeasurable Me; location to one who is everywhere; They imagine ears, eyes, race and form in Me when I am without any; though I am unmanifestable, desireless and self-satiated they assign manifestability, desire and satiety to Me; I am without clothes or ornaments but they put them on Me; and I am the creator of this universe and they look for My origin. When I am self-born they make My idol and install it with ritualistic breathing of life into it. They invoke My presence and revoke it. They assign childhood, youth and old age for Me; when I am immortal they imagine death for Me and grieve imagining that I died; when I am present equally in all they assign the feelings of friendship and animosity in Me. Though I do not belong to any family or race they describe it so. Though I am the storehouse of bliss they describe Me as desirous of various pleasures. Though I am the soul of the entire universe, they slander Me saying I am partial to some and destroy others out of anger. Thus they attach human attributes to Me and consider it to be real Me. If they see an idol they say it is God and if it breaks then they throw it saying there is no God in it. Thus the state of their knowledge is opposite of the real one and comes in the way of their gaining real knowledge. (9:155-171) In short, one who has such ideas about Me lives in vain. (9:172). Shame to the life of such fools and their actions. Their learning of Scriptures is as useless as weapons in the hands of a girl or a mantra told to an unclean person. (9:175-177).

DANGERS FROM WORLDLY ENTANGLEMENT

Similarly, all the knowledge and behaviour of those who have no control on their mind becomes useless. They are caught in the grips of *Prakriti* thus getting entangled in worldly affairs and their mind gets afflicted by the *Tama* attribute affecting their reason and discrimination. Desire and violence generate dissatisfaction in them leading to unrighteous behaviour. Knowledge is destroyed by hate. Persons with materialistic thinking are specially victims of *Prakriti* and are affected by delusion. Affected by *Tama* attribute they cannot be saved by righteous thinking and are lost. (9:178-185).

I AM WHERE THE SAINTS ARE

Now listen to the description of saintly persons which gives pleasure to the tongue. (9:187).

I remain confined like an hermit in the clear conscience of such saintly persons whose detachment does not leave them even in their dream. Their benevolent concern is governed by righteousness and their intellect has the touch of discrimination. By bathing in the river of Knowledge, they have experienced the perfect Brahman and attained peace. Their devotion has reached such a peak that they do not desire liberation. Ethics is apparent even in their normal behaviour. They are full of peace and their consciousness has spread so much as to pervade even Me the pervader of all. Thus these great souls, by knowing My true nature become devoted to Me with increasing love without the slightest thought that they are different from Me. Thus they serve Me even after they become Me, but there is an interesting aspect to it. (9:188-196).

Such devotees, by dancing freely during *Kirtans* (discourses) have made the process of atonement obsolete because in their case there is no sin left. They are personifications of self-restraint, self-suppression and of places of pilgrimage. Thus by My name alone they destroy the sorrows in the world. (9:197-200). They brighten the world with their effulgence and by singing My name everywhere. (9:203-204). You may search for Me all over the universe, but one place you can always find Me is the place where these devotees sing My name under the spell of which they forget everything and remain happy. Continuously uttering My names: Krishna, Vishnu, Hari, Govinda and discussing spiritual matters they sing My praises and move about everywhere. (9:205-211).

And Arjuna, they keep their body and mind in complete control and sitting in vajrasana position and practising pranayama they go in samadhi state and experience complete Self-realisation in the light flashes of Kundalini helped by the mind and the life-force. Thus the path of devotion is deep and mysterious and those who follow it realise that I completely pervade everything living and nonliving. From Brahmadeo to the tiny gnat and the creatures between these two extremes are all My forms. They thus identify everything with My form and respect it. To be humble and polite to every living being becomes their nature. Thus I have explained to you the nature of the great devotion. Now I shall tell you about those who worship Me through performance of Yajna or sacrifice of Knowledge (i. e. through the path of Knowledge) though I have already told you about this earlier (4th chapter). (9:212-229)

YAJNA OF KNOWLEDGE

This Yajna of knowledge is as follows. The original thought that I am one but I desire to be many is the pole for tying the sacrificial animal and dualism is that animal. The five elements are the pandal (temporary enclosed shelter), the special attributes of the five elements namely the five organs and the five types of vital breaths (*Pranas*) are the material to be used in the yajna and ignorance is the *ghee* (clarified butter used in Indian households for cooking and for lamps) to be burnt in it. In this Yajna, the mind and the intellect are the two pits in which the fire of knowledge is ignited. The feeling of equanimity towards pleasure and pain is the altar. The dexterity of the intellect to discriminate is the Mantras in the yajna. Peace is the pair of vessels sruk and sruva used in the yajna. The seeker is the host who performs the yajna. Using the vessels of experience, the mantra of discrimination and rituals of Knowledge, he sacrifices the dualism and destroys the ignorance and then what remains is only the host and the rituals. And when the seeker gets the purifying bath by the water of Self-realisation then he does not find the elements, organs and their objects to be separate from each but considers all of them to be one. When he experiences Brahman in the entire universe the talk of his being an individual living being ends and he believes that from Brahmadeo downwards the Supreme Soul has pervaded everything. Thus some people worship Me by attaining Brahman through the yajna of Knowledge. (9:239- 248)

Some others believe that the material world is varied right from the beginning and it has different names too but basically they are same like the different organs

belonging to the same body. (9:250). They believe that even if people are different and their nature different too, I am in all of them. Thus they behave with the knowledge that everything in the world is Brahman and this also is a Yajna of Knowledge but of a different kind in which they do not allow ideas of duality touch their minds which are full of knowledge of the Brahman. (9:252-254). My expanse is same as the expanse of their knowledge of the Brahman and this itself is their worship (upasana) which they achieve without doing anything. But people who do not understand this are not able to attain Me. (9:261). Actions of all persons done by various means ultimately reach Me, but fools do not understand this and therefore do not attain Me. (9:264).

When that knowledge is obtained it becomes clear that basically I am the *Vedas* and the Kratu (sacred rite) to be performed according to the rituals given in them is also Me. The yajna which emerges from it in all its main and secondary aspects is also Me. The uttering "swaaha" with which offering to gods is made is also Me. Different herbs like Soma is also Me. Offerings in fire like *ghee*, firewood, the mantra with which the offering is made, the priest who offers it in My form as fire are all Me. (9:265-268).

I AM THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER OF UNIVERSE

I am also the father of this universe created by the eight types of *Prakriti* by association with Me. Just as in the half-male-half-female form of the Supreme Dancer (Lord Shiva as Nataraja) both the male and female parts are present I am also the mother of this entire living and

non-living universe. He with whose support this living universe survives and grows is none other than Me. I am also the grandfather of the universe because it is through My mindless state that the pair *Prakriti* and Purush which gave birth to the universe was created. (9:269-272)

The place where all paths of knowledge meet, where all Vedas came together, that which is the subject of knowledge, that about which different streams of thought merge to agree unanimously, that which is known as `holy', all these are only Me. (9:273-274).

I am the **AUM** sound which is the source of the primary sound sprouted from the seed of the Brahman. The letters *A, U* and *Ma* contained in the **AUM** gave birth to the three *Vedas* namely *Rigveda, Yajurveda* and *Samaveda*. Therefore these Vedas and the family of the subsequent literature is also Me. (9:275-277).

The highest place where *Prakriti*, in which this entire living and non-living universe is contained, takes rest when tired is also Me. I am the husband of that *Prakriti* who lives with My support and gives birth to the universe. I am the one who enjoys her attributes in her association. I am also the master of all the universe. (9:278-280)

It is My command that sky (space or ether) should be everywhere, that wind should not be quiet even for a moment, that fire should burn, clouds should rain, mountains should not move, oceans should not cross the limits and earth should bear the burden of all living things. Vedas speak only if I make them speak, Sun moves only if I move it, *Prana* (life-force) the driving force of the universe moves only if I move it; it is by

My command that living things die. Thus I am the master of this universe under whose instructions they perform their tasks and it is I who am the witness to all this. (9:281-285).

Arjuna, I fill this world with name and form and I am the support of the name and the form. The universe is in Me and I am in the universe. I liberate one who surrenders to Me with single-mindedness from the birth and death cycles hence I am the only proper shelter for such a person. (9:286-288). I become many and by means of the different attributes of *Prakriti* perform actions through the living universe. I am the one who exists with equal affection in all creatures from Brahmadeo to the lowest form of life. (9:289-290). I am the support of all this universe and the cause for its creation, sustenance, destruction and re-creation. The universe is rooted in the original thought and finally dissolves in it. The place where that thought returns to rest at the end of the Kalpa period (See note below Ch VIII) until the thought to recreate occurs is also Me. (9:291-295)

When I take the form of the sun and radiate heat, the water bodies become dry and when I take the form of Indra and make rain they fill up. Wood burnt by fire itself becomes fire similarly creatures who die and those who are their killers are both My form. Therefore I am both perishable and imperishable. Is there a place where I am not present? But it is their misfortune that people do not see Me. It is a surprising thing that those who are My own forms do not recognise Me. Their *Karma* comes in the way of believing in My existence. (9:296-302). Therefore Knowledge is essential without

which one cannot do what one ought to do and the good deeds are wasted. (9:305-306).

SIN AND MERIT

Those who are models of behaviour based on the rules of the caste system and who perform yajnas attain the fruits of their performance. But what they have gained by all this is not merit but sin under the name of merit because they have forgotten the one to whom the yajnas reach and instead opted for the heaven where their stay would be limited only to a period appropriate for the quantity of merit. (9:307-310). Actually people think that there is happiness in heaven because they compare it with the tortures of hell. Actually oneness with Me is the only perfect and permanent bliss. Heaven and hell are the two diversions from the path towards Me. The rule is that sin in the form of merit leads one to heaven and pure sin leads to hell while pure merit leads to Me. (9:314-316).

I serve those who have completely surrendered to Me, who think there is nothing better than Me, consider that their whole life belongs to Me and thus, with extreme faith meditate on Me and worship Me. When they accepted the path of My worship, at that time itself the responsibility of taking their care in all respects fell on Me and I was compelled to do what they should have done for themselves. Just as mother bird takes complete care of her babies who have not yet developed wings and lives only for them, I also take care of My devotees who have kept complete faith in Me. If they want *moksha* (liberation) leading to oneness with Me, I take them towards it and if they like to serve Me then I offer them My love. I give them whatever they want

and having given, I guard it also for them. I provide maintenance to all those who give themselves to Me completely. (9:335-343).

Now, there are people who follow other paths who, not realising My all-encompassing quality, perform yajnas to propitiate deities like Agni, Indra, Sun, Moon etc. , but all the yajnas reach Me because I am everything. This type of worship is indirect. Just as, even though roots, branches, flowers etc. have their origin in the same seed, the task of absorbing water is done by only the roots and it is proper to give water at the roots alone and not to other parts of the tree, in the same fashion any worship done without knowing Me is fruitless. (9:344-346). Actions must be backed by Knowledge and this Knowledge must be pure. (9:349-350)

By performing such yajnas therefore, they do not attain Me after they die but only those deities for whose propitiation they performed them. Those who performed rituals for propitiating Manes reach the world of Manes and those who propitiate *Vetal* and other ghost deities for evil ends attain the ghost state when they die. Thus the fruits of the actions is as per their desire. (9:354-358). But those who worship Me only for My sake attain Me even while they live, therefore how can they go anywhere else after death? (9:359-365)

MY REAL DEVOTEES

Those seekers who worship Me with whatever rituals and have surrendered themselves to Me, attain Me. Arjuna, no other method will make a seeker attain Me unless he totally surrenders to Me. (9:366-367). He who claims to know Me does not really know Me. He

who boasts about his achievements is imperfect and immature. Similarly the Yajnas, penance and other rituals which people perform and boast about are not even worth a blade of grass for attaining Me. *Vedas* stumble while describing My nature and describe Me as "*Not this and not that*" making Sanaka and other sages confused about Me. (9:370-371). One can attain Me only when he gives up all thoughts about how great and scholarly he is and becomes humble. (9:378). Therefore one must give up the love of the material body, consciousness about his qualities and pride about his possessions and surrender himself completely to Me. (9:381).

Then, when with boundless love the devotee offers Me a fruit from a tree I anxiously spread My palms to receive it and eat it without even waiting to remove the stem. If he offers Me a flower, I should really smell it but overcome by his love I put it in My mouth and taste it. But why talk of flower? Even if he offers a leaf I do not bother to see whether it is fresh or dry and eat and savour it. And may be even that leaf is not available, but there is no dearth of water which is available free. But when that devotee offers that water with complete devotion, then even if it was free, I feel as if he has built immense temples for Me, given Me jewels more valuable than Kaustubha and served Me delicacies better than manna. You are aware how I devoured the fistful of rice brought by Sudama. (*See notes at the end of the Chapter.*) I only look at the devotion and accept the offering without differentiating between rich and poor, big and small. Really speaking, fruit, flower, leaf etc. are only means of manifesting the devotion and are useless unless offered with the feeling of devotion.

Therefore I am telling you a easy way. Do not permit yourself to forget Me. (9:382-397)

Whatever work you do, whatever things you enjoy, whatever yajnas of various types and other rituals you perform, whatever donations you give to worthy persons and pay your servants or whatever penance or observances you do, do them for the sake of love for Me. And after they are done make an offering of them to Me with such pure and desireless attitude that you should not even remember having performed them. (9:398-401). Then, just as a roasted seed does not germinate, the actions offered to Me do not bear fruit. Arjuna, it is only when *Karma* remains that it gives rise to fruits of happiness and sorrow and leads to rebirth in order to go through them. On the other hand, if the action is offered to Me then immediately the rebirth is avoided and one is saved from the pains accompanying it. Therefore Arjuna, avoid getting trapped into the bonds of the body and thus getting drowned in the ocean of happiness and sorrow and so by following this easy path become one with Me. (9:402-406).

MY NATURE

If you ask Me "What is your nature?" then the answer is, “I am present in all creatures equally without making distinction among them. ”Those persons who know this nature of mine, who abandon their ego and are devoted to Me with their heart and by actions are really in Me even if they are actually in their body and I too am fully in their hearts. The difference between Me and My devotee is in name only. Though they are in their body they are unattached to it. Whatever ego is left in them takes My form and therefore is merged in Me. Those

who are thus devoted to Me with love are not reborn whatever may be their nature. (9:407-415).

DEVOTION NULLIFIES PAST SINS

If you consider such a person's behaviour then you should note that even if he has committed sins in his earlier life, his final span of life has been spent in devotion. Whatever a person contemplates on at the time of death is what he gets in his next birth. Therefore he who has spent the final part of his life in devotion to Me should be considered as the finest among people even though he might have been a crooked person during the earlier part of his life. The sins committed in the earlier part of one's life get washed by the devotion in the later part. Therefore even a crooked person can become one with Me if he washes his sins with sincerity in the waters of repentance. And he becomes noble and pure and then there is fulfilment in his life. He has the same credit as those who have studied Vedas and Yoga. Why say anything further? He who has immutable faith in Me alone is beyond the effects of all actions. He who has enclosed the affairs of mind and intellect in the box of faith and entrusted it to Me thus becomes free from the bonds of his actions. (9:416-424).

You may think that he may reach My state only after death but how can a person who is ever immersed in nectar die? Is not an action done without devotion to Me a sin? Therefore Arjuna, as soon as his consciousness reaches Me he really attains Me. He who is devoted to Me remains in My form. Then he attains My permanent qualities of peace and effulgence. He who wants to attain Me should not

forget devotion to Me. All greatness about wealth, nobility and caste are in vain in the absence of devotion. A devotionless person accumulates only sins and his life is an invitation to sorrow. Therefore one may not belong to a noble family, one may be a low caste person or be an animal, what matters is his devotion. When the king of the elephants prayed to Me when he was caught by the crocodile, did I not rush to his aid? (See note on *Gajendramoksha* at te end of Chapter.) And as soon as I helped him he was free of his elephant body. (9:425- 442).

Arjuna, some may be born in such unspeakably low type of species that even uttering its name may be considered a sin and are not different from a stone as far as knowledge is concerned, but if they have a steady feeling about Me, always utter My name, see My form, think of nothing else but Me, listen to nothing except My praise, whose organs are proud to be of service to Me, whose intellect is unaware of sense objects and thus know Me alone and if not so would rather prefer death and keep all their feelings in Me, then they are not less than Me. Remember that Prahlad, though a demon was tortured because of his devotion to Me and I had to take avatar of Narasimha to save him. (*See note on Prahlad at the end of chapter.*) What I gave him was what he asked on the strength of his devotion which even Indra could not surpass. The moral is what matters is the devotion and not who a being is. (9:443-452)

Once a seeker's mind is filled with devotion to Me then his earlier life history is erased. As long as a person does not attain Me there are differences like *Kshatriya, Vaishya*, woman, *Shudra*, untouchable etc. But once

they attain Me completely all these differences of caste and gender vanish. (9:456-461)

Whatever may be the motive, it is enough that a person's mind is attracted towards Me. Such a person then, in the course of time, reaches My form. (9:463). Gopis attained Me through love, Kamsa through fear, Shishupal through hate, Yadavas through relationship of race, Vasudeva etc. through parental love, and Narada, Dhruva, Akrur, Sanatkumar etc. , through devotion. (*See the note on these devotees at the end of chapter.*) I am the ultimate destination of all paths be it devotion, dispassion or even enmity. Arjuna there is no dearth of methods to reach Me. One may be born in any species, be devoted or inimical to Me but he should be devotee or enemy of Me alone. Through either relation he will attain My form. Therefore those who are born in the species of sin, or Vaishya, Shudra or women, if they carry devotion for Me then they reach Me. (9:465-474).

DEVOTION SAVES

I am the existence and liberation of royal Rishis and brahmins who consider Me as their place of pilgrimage, contemplation and shelter. (9:489).

Arjuna, having been born on this earth full of pain and unhappiness, how can anyone stay away from worshipping Me. Or do they believe that they will get happiness from learning and youth without worshipping Me? It is true that all the material things are for the enjoyment of the body but that body itself is in the jaws of death. (9:492-495). Who has heard of real happiness in this world? (9:501). The lack of concern of the people who have taken birth in this impermanent world

is really surprising. People do not spend even a paisa (a small denomination coin) on things which would help them in this and the after-world. But they spend huge sums of money on harmful things. They consider a person engrossed in sense pleasures as a happy person and consider a person who is burdened by lust and desire as a man of wisdom. They make obeisance to elders whose strength and intellect are weakened and whose death is approaching. As a child grows the parents are full of joy and celebrate birthdays not realising that as it grows its life is getting shorter. People cannot tolerate the word "death" and cry when a person dies. But they do not think about the fact that their own life is also getting shortened day by day. (9:507-513). How topsy-turvy are the ways of this world! (9:515). Arjuna, you have taken birth in this world by virtue of your Karmas. Free yourself of this burden by following the path of devotion which will beget you the pure permanent position in Me. Concentrate your mind in Me, develop love for devotion to Me and make obeisance to everything knowing that I am in everything. He who gets rid of all thoughts and desires by concentrating in Me is known as My devotee. When you succeed in this then you will reach Me. I have told this secret of mine to you. You will reach perfection by knowing this secret which I have hidden from everybody. (9:515-520).

NOTE regarding Sudama (9:382-397). **Sudama**, a poor brahmin boy studied along with Shri Krishna under the same Guru Sandipani. After the studies were over and both returned to their respective homes. Shri Krishna who was a prince consequently became king of the Yadu tribe and established Dwaraka as the capital

of his kingdom on the west coast of Saurashtra, Gujarat. Sudama went to his own village and led the life of a poor brahmin. Unable to make the two ends meet and at the suggestion of his wife he decided to visit Shri Krishna in the hope of getting some help. It is a custom that when one goes to visit somebody he should not go empty-handed but should carry some gift. Sudama had nothing with him except some *Poha* (rice which is boiled, beaten flat and de-husked). On reaching Dwaraka and meeting Shri Krishna he offered the fistful of *Poha* to him who, mighty king that he was accepted the gift of love and ate it then and there with equal love. After being well entertained by Shri Krishna Sudama left without asking for anything. But when he reached his home he found it to be golden.

NOTE on Gajendramoksha (9:425- 442). Gajendramoksha means liberation of the elephant king. There is a story in Bhagavat Puranas which runs as follows: King Indradyumna was cursed by Rishi Agasti and was born as an elephant. At the same time a gandharva (one of the demi-gods who are known for music) named Hoohoo also was born as a crocodile due to the curse from another Rishi. One day while the elephant had gone to a lake to drink water, the crocodile caught his leg and triedd to kill him. The elephant in the throes of death prayed to lord Vishnu offering Him a lotus which he had picked by his trunk. Hearing the prayers lord Vishnu rushed to save His devotee and killed the crocodile thereby liberating both the king and the gandharva.

NOTE on Prahlad (9:443-452) Prahlad was the son of the powerful Daitya kingHiranyakashipu from his wife Kayadhu. Hiranyakashipu had received a boon from

Brahmadeo after a long difficult *Tapas* that he will die neither on land nor on water, neither in the open nor in a house, neither by man nor by animal, neither during day nor at night, neither by weapon nor by mantra etc. On the strength of this boon Hiranyakashipu conquered the Devas and started an an oppressive rule where worship of Lord Vishnu whom he hated was prohibited. However, his wife Kayadhu was devoted to Lord Vishnu and while she was pregnant, Narada the divine Rishi gave her spiritual advice which was heard by Prhlada while in the uterus. Thus, Prahlada was born as a keen devotee of Lord Vishnu which was not liked by his father. Hiranyakashipu, out of his hate for Lord Vishnu tried to kill Prahlada by poisoning him, putting him in boiling oil, by pushing him over a cliff etc. When Prahlada escaped all these attempts Hiranyakashipu confronted him one day demanding to be told where this Vishnu was so that he can catch and kill him. Prahlada replied that He was everywhere. On hearing this Hiranyakashipu angrily asked pointing to a pillar whether he was in that pillar. When Prahlada answered in the affirmative Hiranyakashipu kicked the pillar hardand broke it. Out came Lord Vishnu in the form of a ferocious lion-headed man (*Narasimha*). This is considered as the fourth avatar of Lord Vishnu. Narasimha caught hold of Hiranyakashipu, and sitting on the threshold of the house held him on his lap and killed him by tearing open his intestines with bare hands. Thus Lord Vishnu could kill Hiranyakashipu while still honouring the conditions of the boon and save Prahlada, his devotee.

NOTE on various devotees (9:465-474). Shri Krishna belonged to the Yadava clan ruling from Mathura. **Vasudeva** the king of Yadavas was married to **Devaki**.

Because of a Divine prediction that the eighth child of Devaki will kill **Kamsa** the cousin (uncle's son), the latter seized the kingdom and put Vasudeva and Devaki in prison. Kamsa kept a close watch on the couple in the prison and killed seven children born to Devaki immediately after birth. When the eighth child was to be born Vasudeva decided to smuggle it out. The child was a son and taking advantage of torrential rains managed to take it to Gokul, a village of cowherds or Gopas across the river Yamuna. In Gokul, Yashoda, wife of Nanda the chief of Gokul had just given birth to a female child. He exchanged his son for the female child and returned to the prison. Nanda and Yashoda were happy that a son was born to them and being of dark complexion they named him Krishna. Back in Mathura, the female child was seized by Kamsa and killed. But since he found the child to be a female he had his doubts.

Krishna grew as a healthy naughty child who became a leader of the boys from the village. He was also very dear to the Gopis the wives of the Gopas and it a legend now that Radha one of the Gopis loved him very dearly. Readers should note that Radha is not a historical but a legendary person and the love between Krishna, Radha and other Gopis is transcendental and not physical. Radha is not mentioned in Mahabharata even in the post-Christian era additions to it, and even in Bhagavat Purana known for its teaching of devotion to Lord Vishnu there is only a passing mention of her in a single place but not as a lover of Shri Krishna. But by the time Dnyaneshwar Maharaj wrote Dnyaneshwari, the love legends of Shri Krishna and Gopis especially Radha were well established, hence the mention of their attaining Him through love.

Kamsa came to know that his enemy was growing in Gokul and sent emissaries to kill him but in vain. (Because of his evil deeds Kamsa and his acomplices are referred to in the legends as Asuras or demons. This attribute is well fixed in the public mind.) When all efforts failed, Kamsa decided on a different strategy. He arranged a wrestling competition and invited his nephew Shri Krishna to it. He sent **Akrura** one of his courtiers to invite Shri Krishna for the event. But Akrura was a keen devotee of lord Vishnu and warned Shri Krishna of Kamsa's motives. But confident Shri Krishna accepted the challenge and went to Mathura with his brother Balaram who was also almost equal in martial qualities. In Mathura Shri Krishna killed Kamsa and freed his real parents. Being the son of Vasudeva and Devaki he is also known as Vaasudeva and Devakinandan. In spite of having hated Shri Krishna, Kamsa attained liberation because it was Shri Krishna who killed him.

Shishupal was the king of Chedi and a nephew of Shri Krishna. Rukmini the princess of Vidarbha was in love with Shri Krishna but her brothers forcibly arranged her marriage with Shishupal. But Rukmini, when the ceremonies for her marriage to Shishupal began, secretly contacted Shri Krishna and arranged a scheme by which Shri Krishna would abduct and marry her. Shri Krishna did so. Shishupal became a strong enemy of Shri Krishna. Once during a yajna, Shishupal began berating him in public Shri Krishna beheaded him using his Chakra, a wheel shaped missile. As in the case of Kamsa Shishupal also attained liberation.

Narada was created by Brahmadeo through the power of mind. He was a great philosopher and is well known

for his devotion to Lord Vishnu. He is depicted as moving everywhere in the three worlds (Heaven, earth and nether) singing the name Narayana which belongs to Lord Vishnu preaching devotion. He is notorious for passing news from one person to another and often instigating quarrels.

Dhruva was the son of King Uttanpada who had two wives Suniti and Suruchi. Dhruva was the son from Suniti. Dhruva got a real step-motherly treatment from all because it was Suruchi who was liked by the king. Once Dhruva was unbearably insulted by Suruchi and in anger he left home and went to the forests in search of God. There he met Narada who gave him a mantra and asked him to do *tapas*. Ultimately Vishnu was pleased with him and gave him several boons including the kingdom and best of all a permanent position in the sky as a steady star. The star is named Dhruva and is the same as the Pole star. The name Dhruva is synonymous with steadiness in all indian literature.

Sanatkumar, Sanak, Sanandan and **Sanaatan** Like Narada, these four are also sons of Brahmadeo created by power of the mind for the purpose of procreation of mankind. But all four were dispassionate from birth and decided to remain celibate and follow spiritual path.

CHAPTER 10

DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

EARLIER CHAPTERS SUMMARISED

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj praises his Guru Nivruttinath and says, "By your grace you have given Me the ability to compose in verse this commentary on Bhagavadgita which is supreme among all branches of spiritual knowledge and in which all *Shastras* are harmoniously included. By your grace I have completed the commentary on the first part of Bhagvadgita. The first Chapter describes the despondency felt by Arjuna because of the thought of the annihilation of his friends and relatives due to the war. In the second chapter *Karmayoga*, the yoga of action is explained and at the same time the difference between it and *Jnyanayoga*, the yoga of knowledge of the Sankhyas is also shown. In the third chapter *Karmayoga* is recommended while in the fourth the explanation of the same in combination with knowledge is given. In the fifth chapter, the principle of Yoga is extolled while in the sixth the same principle is explained further describing the method of practice starting from the initial posture to the state of union with the Brahman. Similarly, what yoga state is and the fate yogis who have deviated from the path reach are also explained. In the seven chapter are described the four types of devotees who worship God by destroying the effect of Maya. Then in the eighth chapter, seven questions (about Brahman, *Karma* and *Adhyatma, Adhibhuta, Adhidaivat* and *Adhiyajna*) are answered and until the end of the chapter the topic of the state of the mind at the time of death is discussed.

Whatever philosophy is stated in the fathomless realm of the Vedas is contained in the hundred thousand shlokas of Mahabharata and whatever is contained in the Mahabharata may be found in the dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna which is the Gita and the substance of its seven hundred shlokas is concentrated in the ninth chapter alone. (10:19-31). The greatness of the ninth chapter cannot be stated in words. Oh Guru, I could present it is because of your powers alone. (10: 35). (*See Note 1 at the end of the chapter*). I have thus explained the first nine chapters of Bhagavadgita to the best of my ability. Now listen to the second part. (10:40).

ARJUNA IS NOW FIT TO KNOW TRUTH

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, your mind is now fit to listen to the complete explanation about knowledge of the Self. What I told you so far was to test how attentive you were and you were quite attentive. It is like testing a vessel for leakage by pouring a little water into it first. (10:49-51). Arjuna, I am not doing this as a favour to you but because of my own self-interest. (10:57). Arjuna, I really like you, therefore however much I chat with you, I do not feel satisfied. I am telling you the same thing again and again. Listen to my profound secret which is actually the Universe come to embrace you through words. You have still not understood the truth about Me. What you are seeing as myself is really the Universe." (10:60-63).

I AM DIFFICULT TO KNOW

Vedas became silent while trying to describe Me. Just as the foetus in the womb cannot see its mother's youth, no god can know Me. The knowledge of the great

Rishis cannot recognise Me because the questions who I am, how big I am, where and to whom I was born are the ones which have taken aeons to decide on the answer. Since I am the root of gods, great Rishis and other creatures, they find it difficult to know Me. (10:64-68).

GIVE UP PLEASURES AND EGO TO KNOW ME

Though I am difficult to realise, he who gives up the worldly life with ease turning his back to the sense organs, and even though he were to lead a worldly life goes beyond the realm of the five elements by giving up the ego and the I-am-the-body attitude and by remaining steady in this condition of mind, sees my beginningless form in the light of Self-realisation and understands that I am the original power behind the universe is, among all men, a part of Me. (10:72-76). Even though he may appear outwardly to be an ordinary person, he is not affected by gross things and his sins get automatically nullified. He who knows Me becomes freed of all desires. (10:79-80)

If you are thinking about how to realise Me then listen first to what my nature is and what my different aspects are. My these aspects occur in different beings according to their nature and are spread throughout the universe. (10:81-82)

MY NATURE AND ASPECTS

Among these aspects, intellect is the first, then come the infinite knowledge, freedom from delusion, tolerance, forgiveness and truthfulness. Then come both self-control and victory over the senses as also happiness and sorrow in the world and birth-death.

Fear and fearlessness, non-violence and even-mindedness, contentment and austerity are also my aspects. Charity, success and fame which are seen everywhere are generated in the creatures from Me. Just as there are different creatures, there are also different aspects. But out of these, some aspects are able to realise Me and some are not. Knowing Me or otherwise depends upon one's destiny hence different creatures acquire different aspects. Thus this earth is completely entwined in my aspects. (10:83-90)

Now listen to the eleven more aspects which are the guardians of this universe and who influence the behaviour of all people. These consist of the seven great rishis Kashyap etc. with excellent qualities and most knowledgeable among all great rishis, and the four main Manus like Swayambhuva, from among the fourteen Manus. (see Note 2 at the end of chapter. Also under Ch 8). These eleven aspects were born out of my mind for creation of the universe. Prior to this when the three worlds were not yet created the five elements were quiet and idle. The eleven aspects after they came into being, created the three worlds, and appointed eight chiefs. Thus these eleven are like kings and all the people are their subjects. But keep in mind that all the expanse of this universe has sprung from Me. (10:91-97)

DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CREATOR

In the beginning I was alone. Then mind was created from Me. From that mind the seven rishis and the four Manus were born. They created the eight Prajapatis (governors) who in turn created various types of creatures who have generated all the living population

in the universe. Thus I have created all this expanse, but only those who have faith about the creation will understand it. (10:101-103)

*I am in everything Therefore Arjuna, these aspects are my divine manifestations with which this universe is filled. Therefore from Brahmadeo down to an ant there is nothing in this universe which is not occupied by Me. One who understands this wakes up to the realisation and he is free from the thoughts of differences like big and small, good and bad. He who experiences through yoga that I, my divine manifestations and creatures showing these manifestations are all same, becomes without doubt one with Me. I surrender myself to the devotee who worships Me with the feeling of oneness with Me. Thus the Yoga of devotion with the realisation of oneness about which I told you before goes on uninterrupted. As I have explained in the sixth chapter, it is beneficial even if a seeker dies while leading his life with such devotion. Now I shall tell you the nature of the devotion with oneness with Me. (10:104-111)

Arjuna, just as waves are generated in water, remain in water and are dissipated also in water so is the creation and sustenance of this universe done by Me. Just as the waves cannot occur without water there is nothing in this universe without Me. Those Self-realised persons who, knowing my all pervading nature are devoted to Me with true love, and remaining aware of the fact that place, time and the present are not different from Me, live happily in these three worlds while keeping their minds occupied with Me, considering every creature they meet to be the God. Such persons are the

followers of the real *Bhakti* (devotion) path. (10:112-118).

DEDICATED LOVE IS THE ONLY PATH TO KNOW ME

When people, whose minds are unified with Me and feel satiated by it, who are free from life-death cycles by virtue of their Self-realisation and who dance in the bliss of non-duality under its increasing spell meet each other, they mutually exchange only the bliss of Self-realisation. Their state is like two lakes whose waters mix after flooding. With the rising emotions of their devotion, they forget themselves and having been fully satisfied by gaining Me they loudly sing my praise and even utter the secret mantras told by their Guru. Finally having been overcome by the joy they get by the loud singings, they forget the consciousness of the body and suddenly become quiet and dissolve themselves in that forgetfulness. Due to this excessive emotion of love for Me they are not aware of whether it is day or night. (10:119-129)

Thus those persons who have gained for themselves the pure and complete bliss of my form have already taken possession of the choicest part of the gift that I would have liked to give them. Heaven and liberation are only by-lanes as compared with the royal path they have taken to reach Me. The love and devotion they have for Me is the gift I wish to give them but it must be said that they have already obtained it. Only thing that now remains to be done is to see that this love grows and does not decrease later. (10:130-133)

I AM THE SERVANT OF MY DEVOTEES

It is my desire and duty to see that the spiritual efforts by means of which my devotees will attain Me is encouraged and supported. Because the devotees are attracted towards Me I also feel love for them due to their dedicated devotion. There is a dearth of such loving devotees in my house. For the superficially devoted persons I have created the two paths of heaven and liberation and have put myself bodily along with my consort Laxmi in their hands, but it is only for the loving devotees that I have reserved the bliss of the Self which is beyond the consciousness of the body. (See Note 1 at the end of the chapter). Such is the closeness I have with them but these things are not to be openly expressed. (10:135-140)

Because such philosophers sheltered themselves throughout their life under my Divine Self and did not keep faith in anything other than Me, I am their vanguard holding the torch, destroying the darkness of ignorance and creating the permanent illumination of knowledge. (10:141-143)

ARJUNA WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

Arjuna then asked, "Oh Master, I am now fully satiated. You have removed the dirt of the material world from my mind. I have realised the real meaning of life and now am free from the fire of birth and death. I feel there is a fulfilment in my life now. (10:144-146).

"It is you who are the ultimate Brahman and the place where the universe ultimately rests. You are holiest of the holies and the deity whom Brahmadeo, Vishnu and Shiva worship. You are the twenty-fifth principle, the birthless One beyond the bounds of *Maya*. You are the

one who controls the strings of the past, the present and the future; you are the master of the Soul and the universe. (10:149-152). Rishis also have described you thus, (10:153-155) but because my mind was clouded by the sensual pleasures I could not understand it and the sweet nature of spirituality was tasting bitter instead. (10:158-159). But now having heard it from you, the mind has cleared and I am beginning to understand what the Rishis have said. I have now realised that one who has not heard your advice and tries to understand you on the strength of his intellect will be disappointed. (10:163, 175).

Oh master, please show me those of your Divine manifestations (modes or aspects) which are apparent throughout the universe by their power. Please show me the principal Divine manifestations by which you pervade throughout the universe. (10:184-186). I am puzzled about how to know you and how to meditate on you. You have just now briefly described your aspects. Now elaborate on them and explain to me those by which I shall be able to easily meditate on you." (10:187-189).

INNUMERABLE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

As if he does not remember that he is the creator of Brahmadeo, (10:206), Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, listen. The Divine manifestations about which you asked are innumerable. And though they are My manifestations I am myself not able to understand them. Even otherwise I myself am not able to understand My nature and My magnitude. Therefore listen to those manifestations which are well-known. (10:208-211). When you understand these you will

understand the minor manifestations also and actually the whole world. (10:212-213).

"Arjuna, I exist in every living being as the Soul. I am present in their inner self and in the outer shell or body. I am their beginning, their existence and their end. (10:215-216). Now I shall tell you about My principal manifestations as promised. (10:220).

DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS ENUMERATED

"Arjuna, I am Vishnu among the twelve Adityas and the Sun among all the shining bodies. (*See Note 3 at the end of chapter about various entities and personalities mentioned here*). Among the forty-nine Maruts I am Marichi and among the stars I am the Moon. I am the Samaveda among the Vedas and Indra among the gods. Among the organs I am the eleventh i.e. the mind and the natural consciousness in the creatures is also Me. I am Shankar (Shiva) among all the eleven Rudras. Among the Yakshas and demi-gods I am Kuber, the guardian of wealth and friend of Shankar. I am Agni among the eight Vasus and Meru, the tallest among all the mountains. Among all the priests I am Brihaspati the priestly support of gods and source of knowledge. Among the generals I am the most intelligent Skanda, son of Shankar. Among the lakes I am the ocean with immense storage of water and among the great Rishis I am Bhrigu. Among all the syllables I am the AUM the abode of eternal Truth. I am the Japayajna, (i.e. yajna of silent repetition of mantras) which is the best among all the yajnas. Namajapa with syllables AUM etc. leads to liberation from all the Karmas and its performance does not need external rituals like taking bath etc. Both proper and improper deeds get sanctified

by it. According to Vedas it is the path which leads to the realisation of the Brahman. Among all the stationary mountains I am the Himalaya. (10:221-234)

Among all the trees my principal manifestation is the Ashwattha (Peepul or Ficus Religiosa) tree. Among the Divine Rishis I am Narada and Chitraratha among the Gandharvas. I am Kapilacharya among the great Siddhas and Ucchaisrava among the horses. I am Airavat (Divine elephant) among the elephants and Amrit (immortalising nectar) among the objects obtained when the ocean was churned. Among men I am the king whom all people obey and serve. (10:235-239).

Also among my principal manifestations are Vajra among all the weapons, Kamdhenu the wishing cow among the cows and Madan the god of love among the creative entities. Among the snakes I am the King Vasuki and among the cobras I am the Cobra Ananta. Among all the aquatic creatures I am Varuna the master of the Westerly direction. Among all the Manes I am Aryama. Yama is my principal manifestation among the controllers who takes note of all the good and bad deeds of creatures, examines their conscience and gives reward or retribution according to their *karma*. (10:240-246).

Among the demons, Prahlad is my principal manifestation and it is because of this that he was not affected by their qualities. I am the lion among predators and forest animals. Garuda is my principal manifestation among birds and therefore he is able to carry Me on his back. Among the speedy entities which can go at one stretch round the seven seas on the

vast expanse of this earth in less than a *Ghatika* (24 minutes), I am the wind. I am Shri Rama among all the weapon wielders because it was he who succeeded by means of his bow alone in saving *Dharma* which had come in great danger from Ravana during the *Tretayuga*. He saved the honour of the gods and revived the *Dharma* and became the sun of the Solar dynasty. Among the aquatic animals having tails I am the crocodile. River Ganges is my principal manifestation among the rivers. But Arjuna, if I start enumerating every manifestation even hundreds of births will not be sufficient to cover even half of them. If one has to know all of them that one must first realise Me. (10:247-260).

Therefore understand once for all that I am everything. (10:263) And if one knows my all-pervasiveness then what is the point in knowing my different manifestations? But you are not capable of knowing my all-pervasiveness therefore let Me stop this discussion. (10:264-265). However, since you have asked about my manifestations let Me tell you that Knowledge of the Self is my principal manifestation among all branches of knowledge. Among debates I am the debate which does not end but creates more and more interest among listeners and sweetness in the speech of the speakers. Among the alphabets I am the first letter "A" and among the compound words I am the Dwandwa mode of compounding (double syllables). I am the destroyer who swallows everything from an ant to Brahmadeo the god of creation, the earth along with all the mountains, the ocean which floods the entire universe during the deluge and which accommodates the entire space. I am also He who creates the universe again. It is I who creates all creatures, sustain them and

finally destroy them therefore I am also the Death. (10:266-274).

Among the manifestations expressed by feminine gender there are seven main ones. I am the fame which never fades, and I am the fortune which is accompanied by generosity. And I am the speech which uses discrimination and is supported by justice. I am the memory which comes as soon as one sees a thing. I am also the intellect which is beneficial to one's well-being. Courage and forgiveness are also my principal manifestations. Thus these seven powers expressed as feminine gender are Me only. (10:275-279).

I am Brihatsam within the Samaveda and Gayatri metre among all the metres. I am the Margashirsha (in December) among the twelve months and Vasant (Spring) among the six seasons. (10:280- 283).

I am the Gambling among all the games of cheating therefore nobody can help a person who is looted even in public by gambling. (10:284).

I am the brightness of all the shining objects and success among all desires. Among all professions I am that which brings out justice. I am the goodness among all the good people and I am Shri Krishna among all the Yadavas whose life history and actions you have seen for yourself. Even though you eloped with my sister Subhadra, I did not feel inimical towards you because you and Me are one. I am Vyasa among all the sages and Ushanacharya among poets. (10:285-295).

Among all administrators, I am the sceptre which administers control over everybody from an ant to Brahmadeo. I am the moral science among all the

sciences. I am the Silence among all the secrets because even Brahmadeo cannot do anything to a person who observes silence. I am the knowledge which occurs in the learned. But how long one should go on like this? There is no limit to my manifestations. (10:296-299). Therefore I shall tell you the secret once for all. (10:304).

RECOGNISE AVATAR IN A LEADER

I am the seed which causes the propagation of life therefore one should never qualify anything as big or small and should not differentiate between high and low and realise that all the beings are my forms. (10:304-305). Arjuna, I shall tell you a broad characteristic by which you will recognise my manifestation. In whichever creature you see wealth and kindness occurring together, know that that is my manifestation. (10:306-307).

He who is obeyed by all should not be considered as lonely or poor. Actually the splendour of the universe are within him. The signs by which one can recognise such a person is that the whole world bows to him and obeys him. Persons with these signs are my Avatars, and to say that a particular Avatar is better than the other is committing a sin because I am all the universe. (10:308-312).

KNOWING MANIFESTATIONS NOT ENOUGH

Therefore Arjuna, how are you going to measure the extent of my limitless form by considering my manifestations one by one? Enough of such efforts towards realising Me. Just a fraction of Me has amply covered the entire universe therefore abandon the idea

of duality and be devoted to Me with an attitude of equality. (10:316-317).

NOTE 1 regarding ninth chapter (10:19-31) and (10:135-140).

Devotion to one's Guru is foremost among Nath Sect. Thus saint dnyneshwar ascribes all credit for his work to the grace of his Guru. Different commentators have stressed on different philosophies stated in the Gita. It is clear that Dnyaneshwar Maharaj has preferred to stress on the Path of Devotion which is the subject matter of the ninth chapter. This is also clear from the paragraph ref. (10:135-140). Second point is that Dnyaneshwar Maharaj himself divides the Gita into two parts: first part comprising of the first nine chapters and the second part comprising of the rest.

NOTE 2 regarding Seven Rishis (10:91-97)

The seven great *rishis* referred here are: **Kashyap, Atri, Bharadwaj, Vishwamitra, Gautama, Jamdagni** and **Vashistha**. However, Puranas mention the following seven rishis (Saptarshi) as sons of Brahmadeo: **Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulahak, Kratu**, and **Vasishta**. Kashyap was the son of Marichi. Vashistha is actually a name of a family lineage who were hereditary royal priests of the Ikshwaku dynasty (solar) kings. It was he sixth Vashishtha who was the priest to the king Dasharatha, father of Shri Rama (considered as the seventh avatar of Vishnu). Suta when he expanded the Mahabharata epic in about 450 BC as also later Purana authors have not bothered to distinguish among the various generations of the Vashishtas thus creating a lot of misinterpretations of events and consequent confusion. Vishwamitra lived in the Vedic times. He is the author of the famous Gayatri

Mantra and was a contemporary of the first Vashishtha with whom he had a feud. There was another Vishwamitra, three generations later, contemporary of Devaraja Vasishtha, the third of the line. He was born Vishvaratha, son of the king Gadhi of Kanyakubja. Born a Kshatriya, he wanted to become a Brahmin sage and did long Tapas to achieve his objective. This Vishwamitra's sister was married to rishi Jamadagni the father of Parashuram (considered as the sixth avatar of Vishnu). It has been established by Yardi (*See Prologue*) through a statistical analysis of the metres used in Ramayana Shlokas that the original Ramayana by Valmiki does not contain the story of Shri Rama being taken to forest by Vishwamita nor his meeting Parshurama. Both are latter additions of imaginary events made to the Valmiki Ramayana by Suta made several centuries later in 450 BC. Gautama was senior to Jamadagni by one generation. Atri lived during the time of Shri Rama who had met him in his AshraIma in Chitrakut while in forest. At the time of the meting both Atri and his wife Anasuya were quite old.

NOTE 3 on various entities : (10:235-239), (10:247-260), (10:280- 283).
These entities are various deities etc. from Vedas and Puranas.
Adityas, Maruts, Rudras and **Vasus**: These are groups of Vedic deities. Adityas are the 12 sons of Aditi born from Rishi Kashyap who were probably deified later as aspects of the Sun representing the 12 months. Vishnu, Vivaswat and Indra are better known among them. Maruts were first considered as messengers of death, but later when Yama was designated the god of death they were considered as belonging to Indra's retinue related to storms and lightning. Marichi was their

chief. (This Marichi is different from the one among Saptarshis.) Vasus are a group of eight Vedic deities. Agni is their chief. Rudras are a group of eleven deities with Shiva as their chief.

Airavat, Amrit, Kamadhenu, Ucchaisrava. The Puranic legend is as follows: Bali, the king of the Asuras defeated the Devas and occupied the Deva kingdom in heaven. Devas were advised to obtain the Amrit (Nectar which makes the drinker immortal) from Kshirasagar, the Ocean of milk. The idea was that once Devas consumed Amrit the Asuras would not be able to kill them and they could the defeat the Asuras and regain their kingdom. Devas, by subtle diplomacy, induced the Asuras to jointly churn the ocean to take out invaluable articles out of it including Amrit. The Asuras agreed on the condition that they will get the items. To churn this huge ocean they used mount Mandar as the churner to be rotated by means of the snake Vasuki as the rope. Lord Vishnu became a tortoise to support the mountain to prevent it from sinking. When churning started a terrible poison first came out which, on prayers from both Devas and Asuras, was swallowed by Lord Shiva whose throat turned blue as a consequence. A total of fourteen articles came out which included Lakshmi the Goddess of wealth (who chose Lord Vishnu as her husband), Ucchaisrava the divine horse, Airavat the divine elephant, Kamdhenu the wish-cow, Kalpataru the wish-tree, wine etc. most of which were appropriated by the powerful Asuras. Finally two handsome persons, the Ashwinikumars came out with a vessel of Amrit. When Amrit was brought out the Asuras ran away with it but Lord Vishnu, taking the form of a beautiful woman enticed them and tricked them in such a way that only Devas received the Amrit and became immortal. Devas

then defeated the Asuras and drove them to the nether plane. The Ashwinikumars became the physicians of the Devas.

Ananta. was the king of the Nagas (cobras).

Ashwattha (Peepul or *Ficus Religiosa*) tree is one of the most venerated and worshipped trees.

Bhrigu is one of the most famous ancient rishis. Members of Bhrigu clan were also great warriors.

Brihaspati is the priest of the Devas and is supposed to be a person of knowledge.

Garuda is the divine eagle and the vehicle of Lord Vishnu.

Indra: Indra is the king of Devas and was the most prominent god in the Vedic period. He was a great general of the Aryan tribes who came to India and later deified as king of gods. Later, after Aryans moved into an agricultural era he lost his importance as a worshipped deity.

Varuna: Varuna was a greatgod for the asura aryans who settled in Persia and who were always at war with the Deva Aryans whose descendents settled in India. Varuna was worshipped by Deva Aryans also but after Indra defeated the Asuras by treacherously breaking the peace treaty with their king Vritra, Deva Aryans and their Indian descendents shifted their allegiance to Indra. Varuna was then given a secondary place among the Vedic pantheon. It is said that even the first Vashishta (see Nnote 2 above) used to worship varuna but shifted his allegience to Indra. By about the second century BC Varuna was relegated to a secondary importance and made Chief of water bodies and aquatic creatures and also the chief of the Westerly direction.

Kapil was a great thinker who lived about three centuries before Rishi Atri. He is said to have propounded the Sankhya philosophy. At the time of

Sauti (450 BC) he must have been considered as an accomplished yogi (Siddha) who had achieved occult powers (*Siddhis*). He is often considered as an avatar of Vishnu.

Kuber and Chitraratha: Puranas mention demigods like **Gandharvas**, **Kinnaras** (both demigods of music), **Vidyadhars** and **Yakshas** (guardians) etc. Kuber is the king of the Yakshas and keeper of the wealth of gods. Kuber was the son of Rishi Vishrava and the elder brother of Ravana the villain of Ramayana. Brahmadeo had awarded the kingdom of Lanka to Kuber. Ravana wrested it from him and became the king. Chitraratha is the king of the Gandharvas. Though Puranas portray these people as demigods they are probably different clans of the Deva Aryans who settled in the Himalaya regions.

Margashirsha the ninth lunar month now falls in December. Apparently in Krishna's times the year started with Margashirsha instead of in Chaitra. (*See note at the end of chapter 8*)

Meru is a fictitious mountain around which sun is supposed to revolve daily according to the ancient concept of geography. Some historians consider that Meru refers to the North Pole and is the memory of the days when the Aryans lived in the arctic region.

Narada, See the notes at the end of Chapter 9.

Prahlada See the notes at the end of Chapter 9.

Rama is considered as the seventh avatar of Vishnu. He killed the Daitya king Ravana who was oppressing the earth. He lived about two centuries before Mahabharata war.

Samaveda: There are four Vedas: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. Though scholars consider Rigveda to be the oldest, Samavedis consider Samaveda to be the first Veda from which verses have been

borrowed by Rigveda.
Siddhas are accomplished yogis who have attained siddhis or occult powers.
Skanda and Madan Skanda is the son of Shiva and Parvati. A demon by name Tarakasura became very powerful due to a boon from Brahmadeo and began oppressing people. It was predicted that only the son of Lord Shiva would be able to kill him. But Lord Shiva was engrossed in meditation and was observing celibacy while his wife Parvati, daughter of Parvat and Mena was pining for him. Gods decided on a stratagem by which Parvati was to pray before Lord Shiva and as soon as he opened his eyes and looked at her, Madan the god of love (Cupid of the Greek mythology) was to shoot his love arrow at him. All went as planned but when he realised what had happened Shiva opened his third eye in anger and burnt Madan to ashes. However, Parvati did get a son from Lord Shiva who was named Skanda. The boy was taken care of when he as an infant by Krittikas (which is the name of the six star group Pliedes) and was therefore also called Kartikeya. He is depicted as having six heads and rides a peacock. Skanda killed Tarakasura and liberated people from his oppression.
Subhadra was Krishna's sister. Arjuna and she fell in love. While Shri Krishna was in favour of the marriage, their elder brother Balarama was against it. Shri Krishna arranged that she should elope with Arjuna and later brought about their reconciliation with Balarama.
Vajra is the principal weapon of Indra and known for its hardness among all the weapons,
Vasant is the spring season out of the six seasons in which the lunar year is divided. Other five are Grishma, Varsha (rainy), Sharad, Hemant and Shishir

(cold).
Vasuki was the king of snakes.
Vyasa Son of the great Rishi Paraashara and grandson of Rishi Vashshtha of Ramayana. He is known for collecting and editing all the Vedas hence he is sometimes called Vedavyas. He is also ascribed the authorship of all Puranas, Shastras and History including Jaya, the precursor to the great epic Mahabharata.
Yama is the god of death and deliverer of justice to the souls of the dead according to their Karmas.
Ushanacharya Better known as Shukracharya he was the son of Rishi Bhrigu born of Puloma. His other name was Kavya (meaning poetry) but Rishi Valmiki who lived much later is credited to be the first poet. Valmiki's period is early 12th century BC while Shukracharya's period is much earlier. He was the Chief priest and Guru of the Asuras and is said to know Sanjivani Vidya, the art of reviving the dead. Thus he was a great asset to the Asuras until they received the Amrit. His daughter Devayani, married to Yayati was the mother of Yadu the founder of the Yadava clan into which Shri Krishna was born.

CHAPTER 11

VISION OF UNIVERSAL FORM

ARJUNA REQUESTS TO SEE COSMIC FORM

Arjuna said, "Oh Ocean of kindness, you have made clear that which cannot be told in words. The form you assume at the time when the five elements merge in the

Brahman and when no sign of life and Maya remains is your place of rest. You had kept this form in your heart hidden even from the Vedas and now you have revealed this secret to me. You gave this spiritual knowledge to me in an instant. I should not speak as a separate entity after realising you. There is nothing in this universe without you, but it is my misfortune that I speak as if I am somebody different from you. (11:44-50).

I was carrying the ego that I am an individual named Arjuna and was considering the Kauravas as my relations. Not only that, I was also having a bad dream about the retribution I would face after death from the sin of killing them when suddenly you woke me up from that dream. I considered myself somebody when in reality I am nobody and considered those others as my people whom I find are not in reality related to me at all. You saved me from this extreme madness. But your efforts were not wasted and you succeeded in getting rid of my ignorance. (11:51-64).

You explained to me the nature of Maya from which all creatures are created and to which they return. (11:70). And after explaining Maya, you showed me the root place of the Supreme Soul. By brushing aside Maya which was obscuring Knowledge you introduced me into Brahman the Ultimate Principle. Now I am convinced of all this, but now one more thought has come to mind and to whom else can I ask about it apart from you? (11:76-77).

By experiencing whatever you told me, my mind has become calm. I am eager to see that incomprehensible Divine Cosmic form by whose thought the expanse of this universe comes into existence and then disappears,

which you call your original form and from which you get yourself reborn for some Divine purpose by taking different two or four armed forms; and after that purpose is fulfilled, return to the original form, the one that the Upanishads sing about and sages treasure in their hearts. I am eager to see this form with my own eyes. (11:81-88).

I do not know whether I am worthy of seeing your Cosmic form, therefore first consider my capacity and only then start showing me your Cosmic form, and if I am not worthy then refuse to do so. (11:89). But I am sure you will show it to me because you do assume different forms both for the sake of both knowledgeable and ignorant people. Secondly, you are so large-hearted that once you think of giving something you do not think about whether the person is fit or not. You have granted a holy thing like liberation even to your enemies. (11:97-99), You are benevolent to even those who do disservice to you and are charitable even to the unworthy. (11:106). Please do satisfy my craving to see your form if you are sure I am capable of seeing it with my eyes. (11:111).

SHRI KRISHNA SHOWS HIS COSMIC FORM

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, you asked me to show my Cosmic form and if I showed you only that then what is so big about it? Now you will see that the entire universe is contained in my form. (11:123).

Different forms within the Cosmic form: Look at these forms of mine: some lean and some fat, some short and some tall, some spread out and some straight, some limitless, some uncontrollable and some tame, some active some inactive, some impersonal and some

loving, some very strict, some alert and some negligent, some shallow and some deep, some generous and some miserly, some angry and some calm, some arrogant some quiet, some happy, some noisy, some silent, some sociable, some greedy, some detached, some awake and some sleepy, some satisfied and some in difficulties, some pleased, some armed and some unarmed, some very fearful and some very sociable, some frightening, some strange, some in trance, some busy in social work and some busy sustaining them lovingly, some decimating people in anger, and some merely witnessing everything. Like this there are countless forms in it. (11:124-130).

"Besides these, some are shining with different colours by their effulgence. Some are like red hot gold, some are brown, some are like bright orange sky, some are beautiful like the universe studded with rubies, some are red like the rising sun. Some are like pure crystal and some blue like sapphire, some black and some red, some yellow like gold and some dark like rain clouds, some fair like Champa flower and some very green, some white like the moon. Watch these forms of mine with various colours. Like colours they are shaped also differently. Some are so beautiful that they will defeat even Madan (Cupid). Some are well formed, some bright and attractive like a treasure of decorative beauty unveiled. (11:131- 138). Arjuna, there is no end to the shapes and you will see the whole universe on each of these shapes. (11:140).

Activities of the forms: "When even one of these forms opens its eyes, the twelve Adityas (suns) are created and when the eyes close they merge together and vanish. Flames spread out from the hot breath from

the mouth of the form from which are born Pavaka etc., the eight Vasus and when the eyebrows meet together in anger, the eleven Rudras are born. But when the forms become soft, countless life-givers like Ashwinikumars are formed and through the ears various Vayus are generated. Thus, by the simple play of the same form, gods and siddhas are created. And there are countless number of forms in my Cosmic form which even Vedas found it difficult to describe and which even Brahmadeo could not fathom. Now you actually see many of these forms and enjoy thoroughly the wonderful experience. (11:141-147).

"There are seeds of the world in each of the pores of the forms. Like dust particles in a light beam one may see many universes flying around in the joints of the organs of the forms. In the region of every organ can be seen the expanse of the universe. Now, if you also desire to see what lies beyond the universe, then that is also not very difficult because you will able to see whatever you wish in this form of mine." (11:148-151).

ARJUNA CANNOT SEE COSMIC FORM

Shri Krishna noticed that Arjuna was silent and unresponsive but with the eagerness still on his face. He remarked to Arjuna, "I demonstrated to you the Cosmic form but you are not seeing it." Arjuna replied, "How can I, with my ordinary eyes, see the Cosmic form you are showing me, which according to the Shastras is invisible to senses and can be seen only with the vision of knowledge?" (11:152-159).

ARJUNA BESTOWED WITH DIVINE VISION

Shri Krishna said, " You are right. I should have first bestowed on you the power to see the Cosmic form but I was overcome by the emotional surge of love for you and forgot to do so. (11:161). I am now giving you the power of divine vision to enable you to see my real form. Use that power to enjoy the glory of my expanse encompassing the universe." As soon as Shri Krishna said this the darkness of ignorance melted. (11:176-177). Thus Shri Krishna showed Arjuna the glory of the Cosmic form. (11:179)

VISIBLE WORLD VANISHES

Once Shri Krishna blessed Arjuna, Maya (illusion) vanished. In the light of that glory he saw miracles everywhere. Engrossed in the appreciation of the Cosmic form Arjuna said,

"Oh! Who took away the wide sky which was here just now? Also where did the living and non-living world go? Directions have vanished. It is not possible to know where the sky and the nether has gone! The visible world also has disappeared. At the time when the mind-ness of mind got lost, intellect became uncontrollable and the tendencies of the senses recessed themselves together into the heart, the quiet and concentration reached the peak as if all thoughts are under the spell of delusion."

Surprised, he began looking in all directions and immediately he saw the four armed form of Shri Krishna before him but it had grown and spread itself everywhere in various forms. (See notes at the end of the chapter.) Shri Krishna did not let anything else remain except Himself. At first Arjuna felt happy seeing Shri Krishna's form but as soon as he opened his

eyes he saw the Cosmic form. Thus Shri Krishna fulfilled his desire of seeing the Cosmic form with own eyes. (11:185-196)

COSMIC FORM - BEAUTIFUL AND FRIGHTENING

Then Arjuna observed the many faces of Lord Vishnu wherein beauty and magnificence prevailed everywhere. He also saw there mysterious and frightening faces. Similarly, he also saw heavenly, ornamented and soft faces. Actually his divine sight could not see where the faces ended. Then he began to observe with curiosity the eyes of that form and noticed rows and rows of eyes like opened lotus flowers of various colours shining like the sun. Seeing various such wonders in a single Cosmic form he realised that there are innumerable such scenes in it. Then his eagerness to see where the feet, the crown and arms were located increased. (11:197-206). Thus Arjuna saw all the organs of that limitless Cosmic form. He saw the greatness of that Cosmic form bedecked with the ornaments of diverse types of jewels. How can I describe you the ornaments which the Supreme Brahman itself had turned itself into in order to bedeck its own body? Who has the capacity to understand that the expanse of the divine effulgence which lights the auras of the Sun and the Moon and illuminates this universe is the ornamentation of the Cosmic form? Arjuna saw that Shri Krishna had decorated himself by ornaments which were also himself. (11:208-213).

Weapon wielding arms Then with his divine sight, he began to observe the hands of the Cosmic form. He noticed that they were straight and holding weapons

shining like the deluge of fire,. He saw that Shri Krishna had filled the whole universe by becoming himself the organs, himself the ornaments, himself the arms and the weapons held in them, himself the individual soul and himself the body. The stars were bursting like popcorn due to the rays from the weapons held in the innumerable hands; and fire itself was getting scorched by it and trying to take shelter in the ocean. (11:214-217).

Cosmic form everywhere Frightened, Arjuna looked away and turned his eyes to the neck and the crown. There were bouquets of flowers on the crown, strings of flowers on the body and bright garlands in the neck. Round the waist was wrapped the shining yellow cloth. His whole body was covered with sandal paste. Arjuna was so bewildered by the various decorations that he could not understand whether Shri Krishna was sitting or standing or lying down. Then he opened his eyes and what he saw was the Cosmic form everywhere. Then he closed his eyes and sat quietly but he saw the same Cosmic form inside. When out of fright, because he was seeing innumerable faces, he turned his back he saw the same faces, hands and feet there too. See the effect of God's blessing! Arjuna's seeing and not seeing were both covered by Shri Krishna. (11:218-230).

Brilliance of the Cosmic form How can one describe the brilliance of that Cosmic form? The combined brilliance of the twelve suns at the time of the great deluge was nothing compared to it. (11:237-238). The entire expanse of the universe could be seen on the Cosmic form. When Arjuna saw all this on the body of Shri Krishna, the Supreme God, whatever feeling he had about the universe being different from himself vanished and his mind easily dissolved. He was

flooded internally with joy and his external organs became loose. From head to foot his hair stood erect and his body was covered with sweat, His body was shaking due to waves of internal bliss. His eyes were flooded with tears of happiness and mind was filled by emotions. But even in that bliss of the Brahman there still remained some degree of non-identity between Shri Krishna and Arjuna because of which Arjuna looked around sighing. (11:244-254). Then, folding his hands he spoke,

Everybody and everything contained in the Cosmic form "Oh Master, you have done a great favour on this ordinary person because of which I could see this Cosmic form. I have personally seen that you are the actual support of this universe and I felt very happy by it. Oh my object of worship, innumerable worlds are visible on your body. Heaven along with the gods are visible on your Cosmic form. I am seeing the five elements and all the living beings created from them on your body. The Satyalok with Brahmadeo living in it is present in your form. Another place I can see is Kailas with Mahadeo and Parvati. What more! I am seeing even you in this Cosmic form. The families of Kashyap and other Rishis and the Nether place along with the Nagas are also seen in your Cosmic form. It is as if the fourteen worlds are depicted on each of your organs and the innumerable people in these worlds are also in those picture. Thus I am seeing your unworldly greatness. (11:255-265).

"When I watch with the divine sight, I see that all your hands are in action at the same time. Your limitless bellies appear to me like treasures of cosmic eggs thrown open. Your heads which number in thousands

look like fruits hanging on the tree that is Brahman. Similarly there are rows and rows of countless mouths and eyes. The heaven, the nether world, the earth, the directions and the space have lost their differentiating identities and the entire universe appears on your Cosmic body. Not an iota of space may be found to be without you. This is the extent you have occupied everything. It is apparent that you have pervaded all the different kinds of creatures in this universe. (11:266-273)

You are your own support "When I began to search for the place where have you come from, what supports you, I realised that you are your own support. You are not born of anybody but you are without origin and self-born. You are neither standing nor sitting, you are neither tall nor short; above you and below you there is only yourself. If you ask what your age is like and how you look, the answer is both are only like yourself. Your back, belly are all yourself and I find that whatever I see is all only you. But I find one thing lacking in your Cosmic form and that is you do not have a beginning, the middle and the end. Thus I have observed your Cosmic form. (11:274-280).

Your usual form is a favour for devotees This great Cosmic form of yours is marked with countless forms. The forms from each of which the three worlds get created and dissolved are spread like hair on your body. When I began pondering over who you, who have created such an expanse of the universe, really are and whom you belong, then I realise that you are the driver of my chariot. Oh Shri Krishna, even after being all pervading you assume this loving form only to shower favours on your devotees. The mind and eyes

get satiated seeing your dark form with four arms and if one desires to embrace it, it can be easily embraced by the span of two arms. You assume this beautiful form to favour the devotee but we think of it as ordinary because our sight is limited. Now because of the divine sight that you have bestowed on me this defect is gone and I could see your true greatness. (11:281-294).

But I realise that this vast form belongs to you who are now sitting on the chariot. (11:295).

Unbearable brightness I am not worthy of even getting amazed by your form the brightness of which fills everywhere. Its brightness is so unearthly that even sun appears pale in comparison. It is getting increasingly intense and scorching and even my divine sight cannot bear looking at the brightness. It appears as if the fire at the time of deluge which is dormant in the third eye of Lord Shiva has come out. Similarly the Cosmic egg engulfed in the five fires ignited by the brightness of your Cosmic form is turning into cinders. There is no end to the extensive unearthly brightness of your form which I have witnessed in my lifetime. (11:296-306).

YOU ARE THE BRAHMAN

Shri Krishna, you are the immutable Supreme Brahman which the Upanishads search for and are beyond the sound AUM of three and half syllables. You are the root of all forms and the one and only place of dissolution of the universe. You are inexhaustible, fathomless and imperishable. You are the life of Dharma and though birthless you are constantly new. You are the master of this universe and lying beyond the thirty-six principles you are the thirty-seventh

principle Purusha. (11:307-309). (See Ch 13 for thirty-six principles.)

You have no beginning, middle or the end and your power is boundless. You have limbs all over. Moon and sun are your eyes and they exhibit the play of pleasure and displeasure, punishing some and supporting others with benevolence. (11:310-311).

YOUR FORM IS FRIGHTENING

Your mouth spits fire and your tongue, like the flames dancing during a forest fire is moving among the teeth and the jaws. The universe is getting scorched by the heat of the fire from your mouth and from the brilliance of you Cosmic form. (11:312-314).

And I am seeing that the heaven and the nether world, earth and the sky, the ten directions and all horizons are all pervaded by you alone. How can I understand this amazing form of yours? I cannot even imagine this gigantic and all-pervading form of yours and neither can I bear the brilliance of your ferocious form. Instead of feeling the pleasure of watching your Cosmic form I find even surviving to be difficult. I was enjoying the pleasures of the worldly life until I saw your Cosmic form but now I am disgusted with them and actually am feeling frightened. Oh! How the desire of seeing your Cosmic form has been fulfilled! (11:315- 325).

SAGES, GODS ALL SURRENDER TO YOU

Now look at those sages. Some of them are dissolving into your form in good spirit after burning the seeds of their karmas by the brightness of your body. While some are frightened and praying before you, "Oh God,

we have fallen in the ocean of ignorance and are entangled in the web of sense-objects. We are caught between the heavenly pleasures and the worldly life. Who else except you can will save us from this calamity? Therefore we have surrendered to in all aspects." There are also sages, *Siddhas* and assemblies of *Vidyadhars* who are praising you with holy words. (11:326-331).
The eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, all Sadhyas, Ashwinikumars, Vishwedeo and Vayu with all their splendour as also the Manes, Gandharvas, Yakshas, demons, Indra and other gods and all *siddhas* are observing eagerly from their respective planes your divine form and wonder struck they are bowing to you. Your form itself is the reward for their humble obeisance. (11:332-337)

EVEN GODS ARE FRIGHTENED

Even the gods became frightened after observing your form occupying the three worlds because from whatever direction one looks it is always facing you. Even if the form is only one, it has strange, frightening mouths and eyes and countless hands bearing weapons. This form has countless beautiful arms, legs and stomachs and various hues and each mouth appears to be eager to swallow. These huge mouths of yours appear frightening because they are not able to hide the teeth. You have reduced me, a person of whom even Rudra in his most destructive mood is afraid and from whom Yama the god of death hides, to a state of shivering inside and out due to fright. It is really surprising that this plague, when its frightfulness defeats very fear itself, is called Cosmic form. (11:338-352)

Your angry mouths appear as if they are at war with the lord of death and even sky appears to be dwarfed in comparison with their expanse. These mouths are not identical but each differs from the rest in colour and form. The three worlds are turning to ashes by their brilliance. Even the brilliance has mouths and they contain teeth and jaws. (11:353-356)
I do not understand what you wish to achieve by creating this show of fright but I have started feeling the fear of death. Oh Master, my desire to see your Cosmic form is now fulfilled and I am now satisfied. Who cares if this material body is destroyed? But now I have doubts whether the consciousness will survive. I am shivering by fear inside out including the body, mind, intellect and the soul. I became obsessed of seeing your Cosmic form but after seeing it my knowledge and understanding are lost. Now I am wondering whether our relation of Guru and disciple will survive. (11:365-370)

ARJUNA REQUESTS TO WIND UP THE SHOW

Now please wind up this colossal form of yours. If I knew beforehand that you would do something like this I would not have even mentioned it to you. Now please control this *Maya* of yours and release me from this great fear. (11:383-385)
These Kaurava warriors and the sons of Dhritarashtra have gone into your mouth along with their families. Also the kings of various nations who have come to help them have not survived. You are swallowing the death-like weapons and the four-pronged army and the chariots along with their horses without even your teeth touching them. You have swallowed the truthful and valiant Bhishmacharya and the brahmin Dronacharya.

The great fighter Karna the son of Surya also entered into your jaws. And I also saw that you swiped the warriors on our side too. Oh God! What strange situation has arisen out of the favour I begged for?. By my prayers I have brought death to the world. Nobody can avoid what is written in one's destiny!" (11:392-402).

Arjuna was thus feeling unhappy and wailing in distress. He really did not understand the intention of Shri Krishna in showing him the Cosmic form. Arjuna was in the grips of the delusion that he was the slayer and the Kauravas were the slain. Shri Krishna showed the Cosmic form to him to remove his misunderstanding and show to him that nobody kills anybody but it is He, Shri Krishna who destroys everybody. But Arjuna still could not understand it and he was feeling distressed by the fright. He then repeated the description of the destruction he was observing in the Cosmic form. (11:410-443)
He added, "Oh Shri Krishna, You are understood only through the Vedas, venerable to the whole universe and the root cause of the three worlds. It is because of this that I requested you to show the Cosmic form but you immediately became eager to swallow the three worlds. Therefore I am wondering as to who you really are and why you have acquired so many horrible mouths. Also why you are holding in your hands so many weapons. And why you are frightening us in frequent anger, by growing taller than the sky and with dreadful eyes. Why are you competing with death? (11:444-449).

SHRI KRISHNA TELLS WHO HE IS

To this Shri Krishna replied, "You are asking me who I am and why I have assumed this ferocious form. Then listen. I am really death and am expanding my form to destroy the universe. My mouths are extended everywhere and I am going to swallow all people. (11:450-451). Arjuna, all of you Pandavas are safely outside the range of the calamity of destruction. Remember that only you Pandavas are mine therefore I am swallowing all others. (11:456).

You are only instrumental You have seen this universe enter my mouth and surely nothing out of it will survive. The boasts of this army are meaningless. (11:457-458). Their utterances may appear to be sharper than weapons, more scorching and dangerous than fire but these warriors are nothing better or more useful than fruits in a painting. This is not an army but toys arranged for decoration. The strength on which their bodies do actions has already been destroyed by me. Now these warriors are as lifeless as the statues in a potter's house. (11:463-466). Therefore Arjuna, come to your senses and get up. (11:468). This army which has advantageously come to the battlefield, has already died. So Arjuna, it is merely for namesake that you are instrumental in destroying it. (11:470-471).

The gathering of the army is only an illusion. When you saw them falling into my mouth, then itself they were dead. I have already killed them. You are merely instrumental in killing them. So be victorious and let the world say that those relatives who had become oppressive by their arrogance and were unconquerable by their strength were destroyed effortlessly by Arjuna." (11:475- 481).

ARJUNA HAS A DOUBT

Arjuna said, "Oh Shri Krishna, I agree when you say that you are the Death and swallowing the universe is your play. But it does not stand to reason that when it is not yet the time for the destruction of the universe you should assume the role of death and destroy the universe. (11:490-492).

"It is true that you are ceaseless and you assume your three states of creation, sustenance and destruction which are active at their appropriate times. At the time of creation the states of sustenance and destruction are not present. At the time of sustenance the states of creation and destruction are not active and later at the time of destruction, the states of creation and sustenance vanish. Today the universe is in the state of sustenance and at its height of enjoying it, therefore I do not find it proper that you should destroy it." (11:494-498).

Shri Krishna gestured his agreement with this and said, "I demonstrated to you that the life span of this army is over. Other persons will die in their own time." (11:499).

FEROCIOUSNESS IS WITHDRAWN

By the time these words where uttered Arjuna saw that everything was as it was before. He said, "Shri Krishna, you hold the strings of this universe. It is because of you that the universe has regained its original state." Oh Shri Krishna, you are well-known for pulling people out of sorrow. I am experiencing the great bliss by thinking of it again and again. Because this world is alive it is feeling great love for you, but

the demons from these three worlds fear you because you destroy those who are evil and they are running away from you in all directions. But others, like gods, human beings, Siddhas, Yakshas and all the living and nonliving are bowing to you out of joy. I know why these demons are running away from you instead of surrendering to you. You are the source of inner light and have appeared in person therefore the demons are blown away like dust. I had not understood this until now, but now I saw this unworldly greatness of yours. (11:500-510).

You are the creator You are the eternal limitless Principle. You are full of countless attributes. You are the state of continuous balance. You are the chief of all gods. You are the life of these three worlds. You are inexhaustible with ever auspicious form. You are the principle beyond the truth and untruth. (11:512-513)

You are the origin of both *Prakriti* and *Purush* and are beyond Maya. You are eternal and nobody is older than you. You are the life and support of this world and you alone know the past and the future. Oh incomparable God, the *Shrutis* find happiness in your form. *Maya* which supports the three worlds itself has your support therefore you are called the highest place in which the Brahman rests after the end of the universe. In short it is you who have created this expanse of the universe therefore, Oh the Infinite, who can describe you? (11:514-518).

Is there any object or place not pervaded by you? Oh the Infinite one, you are the Vayu (wind), you are also the Yama who punishes, you are Varuna, Chandra (moon), Brahmadeo the creator and his parent. And whatever other forms you have are your manifestations

with or without form. My obeisance to all of them." (11:519-522).

YOU ARE THE WORLD

Then Arjuna intently looked at Shri Krishna and was satisfied after observing each part of his body. Then he said, bowing at every sentence, "Oh Master, I bow to you. I really experienced that you are not separate from the world but you are everything in it. (11:523-536). But in ignorance I made the most improper error of behaving with you as one behaves with one's relatives. (11:537). You are a living deity and we used you for ordinary tasks for worldly gains. I have been a fool not to realise that you are the inner bliss of the yogis in samadhi and talked to you in anger. (11:542-543). Therefore Oh Master! Forgive me as a mother would if I have directly or indirectly committed indiscretion. (11:556). You are unique in these three worlds. There is none equal or superior to you. I do not know how to express this unworldly greatness of yours." (11:566).

ARJUNA REQUESTS FOR RETURN TO MATERIAL FORM

Speaking in this fashion, Arjuna, full of pure emotions, prostrated before Shri Krishna (11:567) and said, "I am feeling frightened of this Cosmic form therefore please restrain it and show me again your usual four-armed form which is more relaxing and which is experienced after practising all types of yogas or by studying the Shastras or by performing yajnas or after getting by charity. I am eager to see it again. (11:593-597). These eyes do not like seeing any form other than the material form. Nothing else other that that beautiful form is capable of giving us pleasure and liberation There is

nothing else. Therefore, Oh God please restrain this Cosmic form and go back to your material form." (11:605-608).

SHRI KRISHNA REBUKES ARJNA

Shri Krishna said, "I have not seen another thoughtless person like you. You are not happy with so unworldly a thing you got. Instead, you are speaking insistently like a coward. When I show favour to anybody I give him only worldly things. Today, only for you have I arranged this demonstration of the Cosmic form. This most secret form of mine is beyond Maya and beyond the most limitless objects. The Avatars like Krishna etc. take place from here only. This form of mine is formed of only the effulgence of Knowledge and pervades the universe. There is no end to it, is steady and is the root of all world. Nobody has seen or heard of this Cosmic form because it cannot be gained by any external means. (11:609-616)

NO EXTERNAL MEANS CAN LEAD TO THE FORM

The Vedas maintained silence as soon as they reached up to this Cosmic form and Yajnas did not reach beyond the Heaven. The seekers gave up the practice of yoga because it was laborious and students of Shastras did develop liking for it. The perfectly performed actions raced to gain it but could reach only up to the Satyaloka level after great difficulty. Penance (Tapas) saw its splendour and its ferociousness vanished and thus it remained unattainably far from the path of austerity. The Cosmic form which you could see without efforts has not been seen by any human being in this world. Even Brahmadeo has not been

fortunate enough to see this form which you did. (11:617-622)

Therefore you consider yourself fortunate by the vision of the Cosmic form and do not at all get frightened by it. Do not think that there is any other thing superior to this Cosmic form. (11:623)

You are trying to embrace the shadow rather than the real body. This four-armed form is not my real form. It is not proper that you love it eagerly. At least now you leave the desire for the four-armed form and do not ignore the Cosmic form. Even if it is frightening and vast, concentrate steadily on it. (11:629-633).

SHRI KRISHNA RESUMES MATERIAL FORM

You may meditate on my four-armed form for your external satisfaction but do not let your faith deviate from my Cosmic form. Save your love for it. Now you may gladly see my earlier form." So saying, Shri Krishna resumed his human form. (11:636-640)

Arjuna said, "Now I can breath a sigh of relief." (11:663)

ONLY DEVOTION CAN LEAD TO MY FORM

Shri Krishna asked, " Have you forgotten my instruction to first love the Cosmic form and then only come in person to meet my four-armed form? " (11:673-674).There are no worldly means of reaching my Cosmic form. (11:682). Remember that it can be found by only one means and that is by filling your mind with devotion. (11:685)

But that devotion must be like a river flowing towards sea and does not stop until it meets it. Thus the devotee must be ceaselessly devoted to me with all his feelings in order to reach me and become one with me. (11:686-688). Real devotion is that which sees my presence everywhere right from a small ant onwards and in all living and non-living things. And when he sees thus, then he will experience my form and with that naturally see me. (11:690-691). As soon as one experiences my form his ego is destroyed and duality vanishes. Then he realises the natural oneness between me, himself and the entire universe. What is more, by becoming one with me, he gets absorbed in Me. (11:694-695)
All actions of such a devotee are for my sake and there is nothing in this world he loves apart from Me. He considers Me alone as the fruits of his actions in this world and the next and considers Me as his goal in life. He forgets the word "creatures" because he sees me in everything and thus with an attitude of equality and without enmity he worships everything. Such a devotee, when he leaves his material body, reaches Me and remains unified with Me." (11:696-699).

NOTES:

Adityas, Ashwinikumars, Vasus (11:141-147) : See notes under Ch 10.

Four armed form of Shri Krishna. (11:185-196): Lord Vishnu is depicted as having a body like a man but with four arms. Shri Krishna being an avatar of Lord Vishnu is also thus depicted by some Purana writers further implying that contemporary people knew that he was an avatar. This is apparently due to piousness which overrides rational facts. logic or internal consistency. Many deities are depicted as

having more than one head and more than two arms. E.g. Brahmadeo with four heads. Lord Shiva as Panchaanan is shown as having five heads and ten hands. Durga is shown as having one head but six or eight hands.

Abodes of various deities: (11:255-265). Satyalok is the plane on which Brahmadeo is said to live. Kailas is the abode of Lord Shiva (Mahadeo) and his consort Parvati. Lord Vishnu's abode is Vaikuntha where he is depicted as lying on the bed of the great snake Shesha with thousand heads, in Kshirasagar the ocean of milk. Shesha is supposed to be holding and supporsting the earth on his head. Indra lives in Heaven while Asuras, demons live in Patal the nether world. Nagas (serpents) are also supposed to live in the Nether place.

Fourteen worlds: (11:255-265). Brahmadeo when ordered to create the universe is believed to have created the fourteen Bhuvans which implies worlds or planes. The seven higher planes (lokas) arranged in increasingly higher order are: Bhu (earth), Bhuva, Swarga (heaven), Maha, Jana, Tapa, Satya, occupied by spiritual persons of increasingly higher achievement. Bhuva is occupied by souls who are burdened with desires etc., Swarga by deities and persons who have accumulated enough merit, higher planes by persons who worked towards liberation. Souls who are in Bhuva and Swarga are reborn on earth in conditions depending upon their Karma. Souls in Maha and Jana planes are reborn only if they wish so generally for doing good to people. Souls in Tapa and Satya are not reborn. There are seven Patalas or nether planes below the earth plane. Their names and occupants are: Atal (Bal son of Mayaasura), Vital (Lord Hatakeshwar), Sutal (Asura king Bali whom Lord Vishnu himself guards), Talaatal (Mayaasura the king of Danavas),

Mahaatal (Cobras, the sons of Kadru), Rasaatal (Daityas called Nivatkavach) and Paataal (Nagas headed by Vasuki). The occupants of the Pataalas live in splendour and are free from all worldly worries. (they are the same as hell or narak as thought by some people. There are 28 naraks located below earth plane to the south. Individuals are assigned a particular narak with specific paunishments depending upon the Karmas.

Prakriti, Purush and Maya: (11:514-518). (See Chap. 13)

Shrutis and Smritis (11:514-518). Shrutis are those texts which were heard but not written. These are the Vedas including Upanishads. Smritis are later compositions which were written. These include the Codes like Manusmriti.

CHAPTER 12

YOGA OF DEVOTION

WHO IS BETTER - SAGE OR DEVOTEE

Arjuna asked, "Shri Krishna, The Cosmic form you showed me was unworldly and therefore I was frightened. You doubtless exist in both the forms, the material form and the non-material form without attributes. Devotional path gains one your material form while the path of yoga leads to the non-material form. These are the two paths to attain you which lead to the threshold of the respective forms. (12:21-24).

Shri Krishna, please tell me whether the Cosmic form you showed me was your real form or just a play. (12:28).

All actions of your devotees are for your sake. To them, nothing else is superior other than you. They have surrendered all their desires and thoughts only to the devotion to you. The sages treasure your form in their heart and serve you. And the thing which is beyond the syllable AUM is indescribable, which is unlike anything else, is indestructible, not felt by the senses, which cannot be shown and not bound by space or time, on which people meditate with the feeling "I am Brahman". Please tell me who out of the two, the sage (man of knowledge) or the devotee really attains knowledge? (12:29-33).

DEVOTEE IS A SUPERIOR YOGI

Shri Krishna replied, "The devotees whose faith, pushed by the strength of the past achievement, steadily increases with devotion like a river rising during the rainy season, in whose heart love upsurges, who concentrate their attention on me day and night and offer themselves completely to me are the ones I consider as superior yogis. (12:36-39).

YOGA PATH INVOLVES MORE LABOURS

"Arjuna, besides, many seekers endeavour to realise the formless and indestructible Brahman with the attitude of "I am Brahman". (12:40). Restraining the organs with courage and detachment they eliminate the sense pleasures and then by means of yogic postures and through Kundalini force they attain Brahman. Thus, by adopting a balanced attitude to everything and

everybody, they follow the difficult path of yoga and sacrificing their ego they gain the indescribable Brahman. (12:47-48, 50-57). But what they attain after all these efforts is only Me. Thus they do not gain anything special from yoga other than more labours. (12:58-59).

"Those who hope to attain the indescribable Brahman without devotion are impeded in their path by the lure of positions in heaven and the lure of *Riddhi* and *Siddhis*. They have to face the disturbances from desire, anger etc. They have to suppress hunger and thirst, face the elements like wind and sun. To seek happiness in restraint, to make friendship with some tree, surround oneself with chill, cover oneself by hot sun, and sit in the rain is like a Sati burning herself on a funeral pyre without the husband's body on it. (12:60-66). What those who followed this path of yoga got was only a share of sufferings. (12:69). A person cannot attain the Formless (Brahman) while they have their body. Those who strive for the Attributeless with intense desire in spite of all this suffer great pains. Those who follow the path of devotion do not have to undergo these sufferings. (12:73-75).

A DEVOTEE OFFERS EVERYTHING TO ME

The devotees perform their duties happily as prescribed for his caste and avoid actions which are prohibited. They then burn the fruits of these actions by offering them to Me. Their mental and physical tendencies do not go anywhere except towards Me. By such ceaseless worship they have become My place of abode through meditation. They lovingly indulge only with Me forsaking both pleasures and liberation and sacrifice

their body, mind and wealth at My feet with unexceptionable devotion. Is it possible to describe these devotees with mere words? Arjuna, I am obliged to satisfy all their wishes. (12:76-82).

I LOVE MY DEVOTEES

My devotees are dear to me the way they are, like a child to its mother. And I have undertaken to take care of their problems of strife and life. And why should my devotees worry about the worldly problems? These devotees are like my family members therefore is it not my obligation to save them from difficulties? I feel embarrassed when I see that this world is in the throes of life and death. Who will not get frightened by this ocean of earthly life one has to cross? I take Avatar and rush to my devotees lest they get frightened. I became a saviour to them through the means of the raft of my thousand names. (*See notes at the end of chapter*). I set for meditation those who are single and unencumbered while those who have a family I set on the boat of my names. I tie the lifebelt of love to some devotees and bring them to the shore of liberation. But those who call themselves my devotees, even if they be animals, I make them worthy of occupying a place in my kingdom in Vaikuntha. (*See notes at the end of chapter*). Therefore my devotees do not worry at all because I am ever ready to save them. I became obsessed with my devotees as soon as they surrendered their mind and consciousness to me. Therefore Arjuna you should always remember that when a person adopts this singular Bhakti path he becomes a superior devotee. (12:86-96).

VARIOUS WAYS OF ATTAINING DEVOTION

Arjuna, concentrate determinedly your mind and intellect in my form and if you enter my inner part by doing so then you will attain Me. Because, if your mind and intellect remain steady in Me then what difference can remain between you and Me? (12:96-99). Ego automatically accompanies mind and intellect therefore let mind and body be concentrated in my form and let it be steady there. You will thus attain my all-pervading form. I am swearing by this unexceptionable statement. (12:101-103).

Abhyasayoga: And if you are not able to give your undivided attention along with your mind and intellect to me then do thus. During the entire day, turn your mind to me once at least for a moment. At the very instant your mind enjoys the bliss of the experience of my contact at that moment a dislike for the sense pleasures will be created in your mind and it will slowly come out of the worldly matters. (12:104-107). Then slowly and steadily it will enter in me until it becomes one with me. This is what is called Abhyasayoga or Yoga of practice. There is nothing that cannot be obtained by it. Nothing is difficult if one adopts this yoga of practice. Therefore be one with me by adopting this yoga. (12:108- 113).

Offering actions to God If you do not have the strength to adopt this Yoga of practice then remain as you are. Do not control your sense organs, do not leave your pleasures and do not give up your pride also. Obey the family traditions and the rules of law. You are thus free to behave in this manner but see that whatever you may do or decide to do or say do not claim "I did it". Because only the almighty God knows whether something may be done or not. Without

bringing into the mind the thought that the action is complete or incomplete be one with the Self. Giving up the pride of being the doer, avoid loading your mind with thoughts of worldly actions or spiritual actions. Always steady your concentration on me and whatever happens make an offering of it to me. And if your attitude becomes like this then you will be liberated after your death. (12:114-124). (*See notes at the end of the chapter*).

Become desireless: And Arjuna, if you are not able to perform actions for my sake then just be devoted to me. If you find it difficult to offer me your action before resolving to do or after, before completing it or after, then do not bother about it and you need not even long for me. But let your intellect be awake to restraining of the organs and even as the actions take place abandon the desire for the fruits of those actions. Just as trees and creepers shed their fruits you too should renounce the fruits of completed actions. Let there not be even a feeling that I should be remembered or the actions should be performed for me. Let these feelings along with the fruits of action vanish into nothingness. (12:125-130).

Arjuna, you must become desireless regarding all your actions. This sacrifice of the actions may appear to be easy but it is the greatest among all the Yogas. The actions which are nullified by surrender do not accumulate and one does not have to take rebirth after death. (12:132-136).

ATTAINING PEACE

By practice one can get knowledge, by knowledge one gains success in meditation, and once one is engrossed

in meditation, actions (*karmas*) go away. Once actions go away then the fruits are automatically surrendered and one gets uninterrupted peace. Thus this step by step method of practice is the method to achieve peace. (12:137-140).

Arjuna, Knowledge is superior to practice and meditation is superior to knowledge and renouncing the fruits of actions is superior to meditation and the peace is superior to renunciation of fruits of actions. These are the successive steps in this path which lead to peace or bliss of the Brahman. (12:141-143)

WHAT A DEVOTEE IS LIKE

Just as consciousness does not differentiate between "mine" and "yours" my true devotee does not possess the feeling of hatred for any creature. (12:144). He is equally friendly to all and like a loving nursemaid he takes care of them. Egotistic or possessive feelings do not occur in his mind and he is not even conscious of the feelings of pleasure or sorrow. He possesses forgiveness like mother earth and bliss is always apparent in him. (12:148-150).

Just as ocean is always full whether it rains or not, he is happy without external aids. He restrains his mind with staunch and true determination. In his heart he and the supreme Soul have become one. He who is thus enriched by the wealth of yoga surrenders his mind and intellect in me and having been purified internally and externally by it, is devoted to me with love, is THE devotee, THE liberated one, THE yogi and I like him as a husband likes his wife. (12:151-156). I love him like my own life but even this simile is inadequate. The love for a person is like an enchanting mantra. It is not

something which can be expressed in words but I am compelled to tell you because of your faith. And that is why I gave the simile of husband and wife, otherwise how else is it possible to express this love? (12:157-159).

THE DEVOTEE I LOVE

Now listen to the characteristics of the devotee for whom I keep a place in my heart. (12:164)

He does not regret this rude world and others are also not embarrassed by him. He feels that he is the life of all creatures therefore he is not fed up with them. He thinks of the world as his own body and therefore thoughts of likes and dislikes vanish from his mind. Thus, since dwaita or the sense of being different from the universe disappears and feelings of glee and anger vanish. Oh! How I love him who having been thus liberated from feelings of happiness and pain, fear and sorrow, worships me! He is fully satiated with the bliss of the Self and has reached perfection. He is free of all desires and his happiness is ever increasing. (12:166-172)

Liberated while living: One can easily attain liberation in Kashi but it is necessary to die there. Visit to the Himalaya mountains atones one's sins but one's life is in danger there. On the other hand the holiness of saints is not so dangerous. Ganges water is holy and washes the conscience-pricking sins but one is likely to get drowned there. The knowledge of the saints is deep like the Ganges and is difficult to fathom but a devotee does not get drowned in his company. On the contrary he gets liberated while still living. How holy must be the company of a saint by whose touch even Ganges

gets rid of her sins. Such a saint becomes by his holiness the shelter of even holy places and causes the bad thoughts from a person's mind to vanish. He is pure like son from inside out and experiences the principle of the Brahman. His mind is all- pervading but unconcerned about everything. He is always happy and nothing bothers him. He never carries an ego when he does any action. Just as fire gets extinguished without fuel he becomes possessed of peace and is a marked for liberation. Thus such person filled with the feeling of "I am Brahman" goes beyond dualism. But for the sake of the bliss he gets from devotion, he splits himself into two, calling one the devotee and the other as God and thus sets an example of the right path of devotion to non-devotees. I am obsessed with only such devotees who becomes the object for me to meditate upon. I feel happy when I meet him. I take birth as Avatar for him and come in this world. I like him so much that I sacrifice my life for him. (12:173-189).

He likes nothing as much as Self realisation and therefore he does not get pleasure from any kind of physical enjoyment. Having realised that he himself is the universe the feeling of duality has gone from his mind and so has the hatred. Believing firmly that his real self will never get destroyed, he never rues death. And since he himself has become Brahman beyond which there is nothing, he does not desire anything. He does not have feelings like "This is good" and "That is bad." Thus even after having attained the ceaseless Brahman he remains my devotee. I state on oath that no other person is closer to me than such a person. (12:190-196).

Arjuna, he does not carry an iota of feeling of differentiation between people and he considers an enemy and a friend on equal footing. Honour and insult, hot and cold are same to him. He remains undisturbed by happiness or sorrow. He treats all creature in the same way. He is liked by people in all the three worlds. Such a devotee, leaving totally the sense pleasures and desires and by remaining in seclusion, lives by steadying his consciousness in the Self. He is does not feel discouraged by slander nor elated by praise. He goes around keeping equal attitude towards both and behaves accordingly. His silence is not broken even if he utters truth or falsehood because his mind is without thoughts. He is never satiated with the bliss of the mindless Brahmic state. He never takes shelter anywhere and considers the whole world as his place of rest. He is certain that the entire universe is his home. Furthermore, even after becoming the entire universe himself, he is eager for being devoted to me. Therefore I hold him on my head like a crown. To understand how I revered by the three worlds myself revere a devotee, one must have a Guru like Shiva. (12:207-216). Even after reaching the goal of the fourth duty i.e. the liberation, my devotee follows the path of devotion and sets an example to the world. (See notes at the end of the chapter). He is entitled to the liberation and decides who should be accorded the liberation and who should not be and even then he is very humble. And it is because of this that I bow to him and wear his footmark on my chest. In order to gain the bliss of his companionship I who am formless had to take Avatar. There is no comparison with the extent to which I like him. I also like extremely those who listen to his life story and praise him. Arjuna, What I have told you is the yoga of devotion. Its

greatness is such that I personally love such devotee and hold him in my mind and carry him on my head. (12:219-229).

I ALSO LIKE THOSE WHO TELL ABOUT DEVOTEES

Arjuna, in this world, I consider as my devotees and yogis those who, after listening to the interesting narrative (about this yoga), which is like a shower of immortalising nectar, experience it themselves, and in whom it grows by virtue of their faith and by becoming firm in the heart makes them practice it, and who, even when they get beneficial fruits due to their minds being in proper state as explained earlier (like seeds sown in a fertile field), love me and consider that I alone am their ultimate goal and their all in all. Therefore Arjuna, I am always concerned about them. Those who have a liking for the stories of God are themselves the holy places and holy persons. I meditate on them. They are my deity to be worshipped and I do not like any other persons. I am obsessed by them, they are my treasure and I feel satisfied only by meeting them. But Arjuna, I consider as the highest deity those who narrate the stories about my loving devotees. (12:230-239).

NOTES:

Thousand names (12:86-96). Vishnu is known by thousand namees like Keshava, Madhava, Narayana etc. The set of these names is called Vishnusahasranama. Many devotees recite these names as part of their daily worship. Remembering Lord Voshnu by reciting these names is supposed to bring the devotee towards oneness with Him.

Vaikuntha (12:86-96). This is abode of Lord Vishnu in heaven.

Offering actions to God (12:114-124). Often one wonders how to offer actions to God. This advice tells you how to make an offering of your actions to God. What one has to do is to develop an attitude that "Whatever has happened, from the thought of doing the action to its execution successfully or without success was all due to the will of God and I am only an instrument in the process." Thus one sacrifices the actions and their fruits to God and becomes free of the associated Karmas.

Dying in Kashi. (12:173-189). It is believed that those who die in Kashi i.e. Varanasi are liberated. Many people travel to kashi just to die there in the hope of getting liberated.

Four duties of a person. (12:219-229) Every man is supposed to fulfil four duties in his lifetime. These are: **Dharma** or behaving as per the righteous code; **Artha** or earning livelihood for himself and his family; **Kama** or fulfilling sexual duties towards his wife; and **Moksha** or pursuit of liberation. These are called the four *Purusharthas*. Of these the first three are to be done with the co-operation of his wife but the fourth one i.e. striving for liberation he has to pursue alone.

I wear his footmark (12:219-229). According to a legend Rishi Bhrigu kicked Vishnu on his chest but he being a devotee Vishnu proudly carries his footmark on the chest.

CHAPTER 13

THE FIELD AND THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD

DEFINITIONS

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, this body is called the Field and one who knows this is called the Knower of the field. And understand properly that it is I who is the Knower of the Fields and the one who sustains all the Fields. I consider Knowledge as that which makes one understand properly the Field and the Knower of the Fields. Now I shall tell you why the name Field has been given to the body. (13:7-10)

Why it should be called Field, where and how it is created, by which emotions make it grow, whether it is exactly three and half cubits long or not and whether it is a wasteland or a fertile land and to whom does it belong and all its qualities are the matters which will be fully told now. Listen to them carefully. (13:11-13)

IGNORANCE ABOUT THE FIELD BY VEDAS, SHASTRAS ETC.

Vedas: Vedas continue to talk about this Field and even logic began to talk about it endlessly. The six Darshans

became tired discussing it and they have not come to any conclusion. Because of it the relations between the various Shastras have broken and throughout the world debate is going on for their coming to an agreement. So far nobody has been able to say whom this Field belongs. But the power of ego is such that everywhere the matter is being debated and discussed. (13:14-18).

Atheists: Seeing that Vedas have tried to elaborate on it in order to face the Atheists, the nonbelievers started arguing differently. They say to the Vedas that their arguments are false and without base. Some of the nonbelievers shed their clothes and move around naked while some shave their heads but the arguments they offer do not carry any weight. (13:19-21).

Yogis: Because the body will die and be wasted the yogis opted for secluded life and practised Yama and Niyama (Self-control). Because the ego associated with this Field comes in the way of yoga Lord Shiva gave up the kingdom and went to live in the funeral ground. Because of this resolve he considered the ten directions as his cover and burnt the Lord of Love because he entices with pleasure of women. Brahmadeo acquired four mouths to gain additional strength but even he could not understand anything about it. (13:22-26).

Karmayogi: Some (people who follow the path of action) say that the field completely belongs to the Individual Soul and the Prana, the life-force is its tenant. In this house of Prana toil his four brothers (Apana, Vyana, Samana and Udana, *see 6:200*) and Mind is their supervisor. Mind owns bullock pairs in the form of the ten organs (five sense organs and five action organs) and he labours day and night in the farm

of sense pleasures. Avoiding the bed of righteous duties, planting the seeds of injustice and using the fertiliser of sinful deeds he gets the harvest of sins because of which he is reborn millions of times and undergoes suffering. Contrarily, if he uses the bed of righteous duties and plants the seeds of righteous deeds then he enjoys happiness for hundreds of rebirths. (13:27-32)

Sankhyas: On this the followers of the Sankyha philosophy say that this Field does not belong to the Individual soul. He is only a wayfarer in this Field whose residence is temporary. Prana is an entitled labourer who guards it day and night. The Field is leased to the beginningless Prakriti described by the Sankhyas. Since she has domestic labourers it is she who carries out the farming. The three attributes which farm the Field have been born of her. Of these three the Raja attribute sows, the Sattva attributes sustains it and the Tama attribute harvests it. Then Prakriti prepares the trampling enclosure out of the Mahat principle and gets the harvest trampled by the bull which is the Time to separate the grains. Then the evening of the Unmanifestable (Brahman) approaches. (13:33-39)

The intellectuals: The intellectuals did not like these arguments of the Sankhyas. They said, "Prakriti stands nowhere in comparison with the Supreme Brahman. The Will was sleeping in the bedroom of the Formless Brahman on the mattress of dissolution. He suddenly woke up and being always of active disposition he discovered the treasure of the three worlds as per his wish. Then in the garden of the formless Brahman the three worlds which had dissolved took form again. Then he brought together the barren plots of the five

principles (Air, Water, Earth, Fire and Sky) and built the four kinds of life, those who are born from sweat, those born from eggs, those through mating and those born from seeds. Then by making parts of each of the five principles he created the material world. Then using the rubble of actions and non-actions he built walls on two sides and converted the barren land in the middle into forests. In order to sustain the comings and goings in the forest, he created the two tunnels of birth and death arranging by means of the Divine will that the tunnels will extend from the material world to the Brahman. Then the Divine will in collaboration with the ego and with the intellect as intermediary, arranged to cultivate the living and nonliving world throughout life. Thus the Divine will which branched out of the Brahman is therefore the root of the world." (13:40-50)

Naturalists: When the intellectuals said this, the Naturalists (Swabhavavadi) asked, "If one has to imagine the bedroom of the Divine will in the village of the Brahman then what is wrong with believing in the Prakriti aspect of the Brahman as propounded by the Sankhyas? But forget about these things and listen to the real facts. Who filled the sky with the clouds? Who supports the stars in space? Who stretched the ceiling of the sky and when? Who decided that wind should always flow? Who planted the hair? Who filed the oceans? Who makes the rain pour? Just as these things occur because they are natural the Field is also natural. It does not anybody's proprietary right over it. Whoever carries its burden and works it gets its benefits, it is not fruitful to anybody else." (13:51-57)

Fatalists: On this the Fatalists said, "If this were true then how does Death always rule over the body? The

tentacles of Death extend even beyond the time of the great Kalpa (Time at which world is destroyed by deluge) when it devours even *Satyaloka*, the Brahmadeo's region. He kills the eight ever renewed Guardians and the keepers of the eight directions and the residents of heaven. And other weaker lives die and fall in the ravine of birth-death just by the breath of Death. (Free translation). Just look at the jaws of death which are big enough to swallow the entire universe. Therefore we hypothesise that it is the Death which rules the Field." (13:58-65)

Debate by Rishis: Thus there are various opinions about this Field. The Rishis in the *Naimisha* Forest debated on it extensively which are recorded in the Puranas. In Vedas, the *Brihatsama* Sutra is very holy from the point of view of Knowledge. But it has also not been able to fathom it. Many great poets also have used their intelligence to analyse this question of this Field. But this Field is of such a nature and so extensive that nobody has ever found out whom exactly it belongs. Now I shall explain to you completely the nature of this Field. (13:66-71)

CONSTITUTION OF THE FIELD

This Field is made up of thirty-six principles which are, the five principles (or elements), the ego, intellect, the Unmanifest, the ten organs (five sense organs and five organs of action), the mind which is the eleventh organ, the ten objects of the senses, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and the aggregate (*Sanghat*) of all these, the consciousness and fortitude. Now I shall tell you about which are he five principles, which are the sense

objects, what is the nature of the organs etc. one by one. (13:72-75).

Five elements and ego: The five elements are the earth, water, fire, air and sky. (13:76). The ego is hidden and is latent within the Prakriti. When the five elements come together to form the body it is this ego which makes this body dance around. (13:79, 81). The surprising thing about this ego is that it does not affect the ignorant persons but gets its hold on the learned ones putting them into all sorts of difficulties. (13: 82).

Intellect: Now listen to the characteristics of intellect. When desire (lust) becomes strong the sense-organs if they are favourable, help to bring in their objects and expose the individual to a variety of pleasures and pains. The intellect decides how much is the pleasure and how much is the pain. It decides where the pleasure lies and where pain occurs; which is a meritorious deed and which is sinful; which is pure and which is impure. The quality by which an individual is able to tell good and bad, small and big etc. and judge the sense-objects, that which is the basic means of gaining knowledge and due to which the Sattva attribute in a person grows and which is the meeting place of the individual and the Soul is to be recognised as the intellect. (13:83-89)

***Unmanifest*:** Now I shall tell you the characteristics of the Unmanifest. The Prakriti of the Sankhya philosophy is the Unmanifestable. I had described two different aspects of Prakriti, *A-Para* and *Para*, when I explained the Sankhya philosophy to you earlier (Seventh chapter). Out of those two the second one Para which is the Life (or life-force) is also called Unmanifestable. (13:90-92). Just as after death of the material body all

the impressions of actions throughout the lifetime merge with the Karmas associated with the subtle body of desires, (13:94) the five principles and the creatures created by them shed their gross qualities and the place where merge should be called Unmanifestable. (13:96-97).

The Ten Organs: Now listen to the different types of organs. Ears, nose, eyes, skin and tongue are the five sense organs. Once these five senses come to an accord then the intellect starts thinking about pleasures and pains. The organs of speech, hands, feet, anus and the sex organs are the five organs of action through which the power of action which accompanies life and is present in a living being makes its body perform actions. (13:98-102).

Mind: Now I shall explain to you what mind is. That which lies at the joining place of the organs and the intellect, playing around by its fickle nature and with the help of the Raja attribute, it gives deceptive appearances like the blue colour of the sky or like the waves in a mirage. When the body takes shape out of the five principles (elements) through the union of the semens and the ovum the air principle gets divided into ten parts with ten different aspects which get themselves established in ten different parts according to the individual properties and functions of each. Due to its purely fickle nature it gains its strength from the Raja attribute and implants itself firmly outside the intellect and above the ego i.e. in between them. It has been named as "mind" for no particular reason but actually it is only a concept. Because of it the Soul gets to be associated with the body. It is the root cause of the inclination for action. It strengthens the lust and always

incites the ego. It increases the desire, strengthens the hope and nurtures fear. Because of it the duality (disunity) is created, ignorance prevails and it pushes the organs into sense-pleasures. It creates conceptual world and immediately destroys it also. It assembles stacks of ambitions and disassembles them. It is a storehouse of delusion and is the inner core of the air principle. It has closed the doors of the intellect. This then without doubt is the mind. (13:103-116).

Sense-objects: Now listen to the various types of sense-objects and their names. Touch, sound, form, taste and smell are the objects of the five sense organs through which knowledge reaches out. (13:117-118).

Action-objects: The pronunciation of vowels and consonants, the action of taking or throwing, walking, passing of fecus and urine are the objects of the five organs of action through which the body functions. These are then the ten objects present in the body. (13:119-120).

Desire: Now I shall describe the desire. That which excites the emotions after remembering or hearing about past events, that which generates craving when the senses encounter sense objects, causes the mind to run helter-skelter and the organs to step in where they should not go, that which makes the intellect crazy and that which has a liking for the sense objects is called desire. (13:121-125)

Hatred: The feeling in the mind when the organs do not get the desired pleasures of sense objects is called hatred. (13:126)

Bliss: Now, bliss or happiness is to be understood as that due to which an individual forgets all other things including one's body because activities of the body and mind have ceased. The state of mind which causes the life force to be inactivated but makes goodness grow, which causes the tendencies of the sense organs to be lulled into sleep and in which the individual meets the soul, that state is called bliss. And the state of mind where these things are not gained is called sorrow. One does not gain happiness when desires and ambitions are present but it comes automatically in their absence. Therefore presence or absence of desire and ambitions are the causes of sorrow and happiness respectively. (13:127-133).

Chetana: The aloof and unattached power of the consciousness is called the vital power or life-principle (Chetana). It functions throughout the body right from the nail of the toe to the hair on the head and remains unchanged throughout during the three states of the body viz. wakefulness, dream and sleep. It brings freshness to the mind, intellect etc. and keeps the Nature lovely and cheerful. It is present in some measure or other in all the animate and **inanimate** objects. (13:134-137). By association with the Soul this vital power or life-principle puts life into the inanimate body. (13: 141).

Fortitude: Now listen to the description of fortitude or courage. The five principles are natural enemies of each other. Water destroys the earth and is itself dried away by fire. Wind fights with fire and is itself devoured by the sky (space). These five principles come together in the body and abandoning the mutual conflict help each other through their individual characteristics. The

quality which causes this rare unity to occur and sustains it is called the fortitude or courage. (13:142-148).

Sanghat And the assembly of all these thirty-six principles including life principle is called the aggregate or Sanghat. (13:149).

Thus I have explained to you the characteristics of the thirty-six principles which constitute the Field. When these thirty-six principles come together that aggregate is called the Field. Figuratively also it is called the Field because the crop of meritorious and sinful deeds is harvested in this aggregate. Some also call it the body and is also known by many other names. But whatever occurs and is destroyed between the material up to this side of the Brahman is all Field. (13:150, 155-158).

Attributes influences birth Living creatures are born in various species like deities, humans, reptiles etc. They are born so according to the influence of the three attributes Sattva, Raja and Tama and the Karma. The details about these attributes will be discussed later (Chapter fourteen). Thus I have told you all the characteristics and attributes of the Field. (13:159-161).

KNOWLEDGE

Now I shall tell you about the generous Knowledge. For the sake of this knowledge yogis adopt the difficult path of yoga avoiding the attractions of a place in heaven and of the Siddhis. people perform difficult penances, yajnas and other ritualistic worship or jump wholeheartedly into devotion or follow the path of Kundalini yoga and in the hope they will some day attain this knowledge spend hundreds of lifetimes in the

service of their Guru. This knowledge which destroys the ignorance and unifies the individual with the Brahman, closes the doors of the senses, cripples the tendency for materialistic actions and removes the unhappiness from the mind. Because of it the duality becomes scarce and the sense of equality prevails. It removes the arrogance and destroys delusion and does not let the language of "I" and "others". It uproots the worldly attitude and cleans the mire of desire and embraces with ease the difficult-to-know ultimate principle of Brahman. When it manifests itself the vital force which drives the world loses its power. By its light intellect opens its eyes and the individual rolls in bliss. The pure and holy knowledge purifies the mind laden with all sorts of impure notions. By attaining it the disease of I-am-the-body feeling with which an individual is suffering is cured. I am explaining that knowledge though it is really not explainable. It has to be heard and understood through intellect because it is not visible to the eyes. But if it is understood once by intellect it becomes visible to the eyes through the actions of the organs just as the presence of underground water when discovered by the deep roots becomes apparent through the foliage. In the same way the presence of this knowledge in the heart of a person is indicated through certain characteristic signs on that person's body which I shall now tell you. (13:162-184)

BODY SIGNS ON MAN OF KNOWLEDGE

***Humility*:** Because he lacks pride a man of knowledge does not like to be equated with anybody and he feels awkward if burdened with greatness and honour. He feels nervous by praise or honour or if one openly applauds his worthiness. He does not let greatness to be

showered on him. He feels distressed even by obeisance from others. Lest his greatness increase in public eyes he pretends to be a simpleton, hiding his wisdom. Ignoring his greatness he deliberately goes around as if he is a mad person. (13:185-192).

***Being prideless avoids attention*:** He detests fame and does not like discussing Shastras. He prefers to sit quietly and he strongly wishes that people should ignore him and relatives should not worry about him. His actions are generally such that they will instil humility in him and appearance of being insignificant. He prefers to live in such a way that people ignore his existence. He moves around in such a light-footed manner that people wonder whether he is really walking or is being carried around by wind. He prays that his existence should be ignored, nobody should remember his name or looks and everybody should go away from him frightened. He always prefers to live in solitude and feels happy in deserted places. He is in sympathy with the wind, converses with the sky and is friendly with the trees. He who has these characteristics of pridelessness may be considered as having attained knowledge. (13:193-202).

Unpretentiousness: Now listen to the characteristic of unpretentiousness (inostensibility) and how to identify it. (13:202). An unpretentious person does not speak about his meritorious actions. (13:204). He makes a secret of his charitable and benevolent deeds. He does not talk about the favours he has done to others. He does not boast about his learning and does not sell his knowledge for public applause. He behaves like a miser when it comes to expenditure on his own person but he spends generously on religious work. At home he may

be wanting in everything but when it comes to charity he competes with the wishing tree. In short, he is wise in the religious duties, generous in charity and clever in spiritual discussions but behaves like a simpleton in other matters. Though he knows perfectly well the path to liberation he is poor in the worldly matters. (13:207-212). Therefore Arjuna, he who has these characteristics may be considered to be having Knowledge in his grasp. (13:216).

Nonviolence: Now I shall tell you about the characteristics of nonviolence. Many people have defined nonviolence in different ways according to their own school of thought. (13:217-218).

Nonviolence according to Purvamimansa It has been told rather oddly in Purvamimansa that some types violence such as cutting the branches of a tree to fence the trunk or satisfying one's hunger by cutting one's hand, cooking and eating it are not violence but nonviolence. People perform Yajnas for preventing drought. In the beginning of the Yajnas itself animals are definitely killed. Under this situation how can the nonviolence present beyond be seen? Where only violence is sown how can one harvest nonviolence? But the greed of the performers of the Yajnas is strange. (13:219-224).

Nonviolence according to Ayurveda In Ayurveda also the same approach, i.e. that of taking a life to save another has been recommended. For preparing the medicines the Ayurveda experts dig the roots of the trees, some trees are uprooted with the roots and leaves, some are in the middle, the bark of some is peeled away and the cores of some are boiled. They bleed the trees

dry, trees who have no enmity with anyone at all by making cuts all over them to extract their essence. Diseased people are thus cured by killing the trees. They cut the stomach of live animals to remove the biles in order to save sick people. (13:225-230). It is like looting the poor to distribute free food in charity or like burning one's blanket to warm oneself. One doe not know whether one should laugh or cry. (13:231-234).

Nonviolence according Jain ReligionIn one religion (Jain) they drink water after filtering it. But because of the filtering many lives die. Some people, afraid of committing violence, eat the grains raw without cooking. But this indigestible food causes agony to the person and brings him on the verge of death which is nothing but violence. (13:235-236).

Nonviolence according to Shri Krishna Thus, understand that according to the ritualistic approach, permitted violence is equivalent to nonviolence. When I mentioned nonviolence first, I did not want to omit mentioning these opinions hence I mentioned them first so that you also will know about them. When one puts forth one's opinions one has also to consider other opinions which is the reason I discussed them so far. (13:237-240).

Now listen to the characteristics of nonviolence according to my opinion. If these characteristics are found in any person then it will be found that he has attained knowledge. Whether nonviolence is ingrained in a person or nor may be found from his behaviour. Similarly, the impression of nonviolence on the mind after one attains knowledge is as follows (13:241-245).

Characteristics of nonviolence Such person treads very carefully due to compassion for the minute living beings which he knows are present even in atoms. His path is filled with friendly feelings and he is extremely careful about treading on the insects and other living beings under his feet. His sense of nonviolence cannot be expressed in words. (13:249-251). He treads on the ground so delicately that if by mistake his feet touch any living thing then it actually gets comfort from it. (13:254). He feels that if he were to walk stamping his feet than that the sleep of the all-pervading Lord would get disturbed and His health would get affected and with these thoughts he returns without treading on any creature. (13:257-258).

You will notice kindness even in his speech. When he speaks, love oozes from his mouth first and then the words follow. As far as possible he does not speak to anybody and if an occasion for speaking arises then fearing that his words may hurt somebody he observes silence. Then if perhaps someone requests then he speaks with love and to the listener he appears like his parents. (13:263-268).

His talk, true but soft, limited but straightforward is like the flow of nectar. Contradiction, arguments, irritating harsh words, ridicule, torture, maliciousness, obstruction, irritation, nastiness, showing false hope, doubt, falsehood are completely absent in his talk. (13:270-272).

Also, his gaze is such that his eyebrows are never raised. The reason is that he believes every living creature has a soul and is afraid that his gaze might hurt it. He therefore generally does not look at anybody and

if at all he looks out of the inner kindness then the creature at whom he looks feels satisfied. (13:273-276).

Just as his eyes are kind to the living creatures so are his hands. Yogis are not left with any desires because of their fulfilment. In the same way his hands are inactive because nothing more remains to be done. He does not like to take even a staff or stick in his hand then why talk of a weapon? He does not stroke his body lest the hair on his body get disturbed. And he feels that cutting his nails is like committing violence therefore he grows them. He feels shy even while raising his hands in reassurance or giving a supporting hand to a falling person or gently stroking a suffering person. But even moon's rays do not have that love with which he helps to remove the suffering by his touch. The movements of his hands are have the character and nature of a good person. (13:277-292).

Now regarding his mind, understand that the behaviour of the organs I told so far are not different from the behaviour of the mind. (13:293). Mind expresses itself through the organs. (13:296). If there is no place for nonviolence in the mind itself then how can it be seen outside? Anything is created in the mind first and is then expressed through speech, looks or hands. How can anything be expressed in words if it is not there in the mind? When the mind-ness of mind vanishes then the organs stop functioning. (13:297-301). Mind is the root of actions of the organs and it functions through the organs. The desires in the mind are manifested through the organs. If nonviolence is well ingrained in the mind then the organs function on its strength. The mind imparts the kindness in it to the limbs and makes them behave with nonviolence. Thus, he who has

abandoned all violence from his mind, body and speech is the beautiful temple of Knowledge. Not only that, he is the Knowledge personified. If you wish to see nonviolence the greatness of which we hear and read about then you see that person and your wish will be fulfilled. (13:303-313).

Abodes of Knowledge: Now that your outlook has become clear, I shall introduce you well to Knowledge. Knowledge is present where there is forbearance (forgiveness) without regret. (13:339-340). Forbearance gets nurtured within a man of Knowledge. I shall now tell you the signs by which one may judge this. (13:342).

Tolerance and Forbearance He is tolerant to all good and bad situations. He does not feel perturbed by any of the three kinds of difficulties - personal, external and elemental. He gets the same sense of contentment with the expected gains as with the unexpected losses. He accepts honour and insult, pleasure and pain with the same calmness. Praise and slander do not disturb his balance. He does not feel uneasy by the heat of the sun nor does he shiver by cold and he does not feel frightened in any situation. (13:343-347). There is nothing which he cannot tolerate and he is not even aware that he is tolerating. He considers that all the sufferings and enjoyments a body has to go through are himself. Therefore he does not feel that he is doing something out of ordinary. He who possesses such forbearance without regret imparts greatness to Knowledge. Such persons are really the essence of Knowledge. (13:351-353).

Uprightness Now I shall tell you about the nature of uprightness. An upright person is impartial to everybody like the vital force (Prana) which supports with equal favour both good and bad people. (13:354-355). Its mental attitude and behaviour does not change from person to person. He knows the nature of the world thoroughly and behaves as if he has known it since old times and therefore he does not know the meaning of "mine" and "yours". He can mix with anybody and he does not have prejudice against anybody. His nature is straightforward. There are no desires or doubts in his mind. He does not hesitate to express his mind before people. He cannot hide anything in the corners of his mind. His mind being pure his actions are also pure. Since he is fully satisfied due to Self- realisation. he does not spend his time in thoughts. He neither reins his mind nor does he let it go adrift. He does not have deceit in his mind nor vagueness in his words and he never behaves with ill will with anybody. All his actions are straightforward, without deceit and pure and his five vital airs also are always free. A person having these qualities is to be understood as uprightness personified and Knowledge resides in him. (13:357-368).

Devotion to Guru Now I shall tell you about the method of devotion to one's Guru. This service of the Guru is the birth- place of all fortunes and makes an individual even in sorrowful state to attain Brahman. Listen with complete attention. (13:369- 371).

He who has dedicated his mind and body to the Guru-tradition is the storehouse of Guru-devotion. His thoughts are about the place of abode of his Guru. He rushes to welcome even the wind blowing from that

region and requests it to visit his home. Out of the mad love he has for the Guru he likes to talk only about the direction in which his Guru lives. He considers Guru's home as his own legacy but being bound by Guru's orders he has to live in his own place. Then he longs for the release from Guru's orders and an opportunity to meet him and in this mood a moment feels like a thousand years to him. If somebody arrives from Guru's village or Guru himself sends someone then he feels like person revived from death. (13:374-380). He feels elated even by the name of his Guru's tradition. If you find anybody with this kind of love for the Guru tradition then understand that Knowledge is always at his service. (13:382-383).

Then with great love in his heart he meditates on the form of his Guru. By installing that form in his pure heart he himself becomes the articles of worship or he installs his Guru like Shivalinga in the temple of bliss situated in the premises of Knowledge and bathes with the nectar of meditation. Then when the sun of Self-realisation rises he fills the basket of intellect with flowers of pure feelings and offers them to the Guru as Lord Shiva. He considers all the three times i.e. morning, noon and evening as auspicious for this worship and burns the myrrh of ego and ever waves Arti with the lamp of knowledge. He offers his Guru the food of non-duality and taking him to be Shivalinga serves like its priest. (13:385-390).

Sometimes his intellect imagines his Guru to be the husband lying on the bed of life and experiences his loving admiration. Sometimes there is such strong waves of love in his mind that he calls the love as the ocean of milk and the limitless bliss experienced by

meditating there same as the bed of the Great Shesha the serpent where his Guru is relaxing in the form of Lord Vishnu; and he himself becomes His consort Laxmi serving Him. He stands before Him becoming Garuda as well and becomes Brahmadeo created from His navel and with the love for his Guru he experiences the bliss of meditation within his mind. (13:391-395).

Sometimes on the strength of devotion he fancies his Guru as his mother and lying on her lap enjoys the breast milk. Or imagining his Guru to be a cow under the tree of Knowledge becomes its calf. Sometimes an idea that he is a fish in the waters of his Guru's benevolence flashes in his mind. He imagines the Guru's benevolence to be a shower of nectar watering the plant of attitude of service. (13:396-399).

See how limitless his love is! Sometimes he considers himself to be just hatched chick without eyes or wings of his Guru and imagining him to be the mother bird gets fed by her beak. Thus just as when waves arise one after other at high tide, he goes from meditation to meditation by the love for his Guru. (13:400-402).

Now I shall tell you how he serves the Guru externally. He resolves, "I will serve my Guru in the best possible way and Guru will become pleased by it and tell me affectionately to ask for something. Once my master is pleased with my service I shall pray to him thus: ‘Oh Master, Let me be your entire entourage. I shall be the articles whichever are needed for your service.’ And you will see the wonder of my service. Guru is a mother to many he will be mother to me alone and I shall make him say it on oath. (13:403-410). I shall arrange such that the Guru will be obsessed with me and will be

dedicated only to me and will shower his love only on me." (13: 411)

Thus runs his mind in fanciful thoughts. He says, "I shall be the place of abode of my Guru and serve him becoming his servant. I shall be the threshold which my Guru crosses and I shall also be the doors of the house as well as the doorkeeper. I shall be his sandals and I myself will make him wear them. I shall be his umbrella too and I myself will hold it over him. I shall be his vanguard and warn him of the ups and downs of the ground before him. I shall be the fly swap, the valet, the server of water-jug for washing hands and mouth and I shall be the clean basin to receive the mouthwash. I shall be the server of the betel leaf and also the residue which is spitted out. And I shall be the one to serve him in giving bath. (13:412-420).

"I shall be the seat, ornaments, clothes, applications like sandalpaste etc. of my Guru. I shall become the cook and serve him food wave the lamp round him. When the Guru sits for his meals I shall seat with him and later I shall come forward to offer him the betel leaf. I shall remove his dish, spread his bed and massage his legs. I shall be his throne and the Guru will sit on it. Thus I shall fulfil my vow to serve him. (13:421-425).

"There will be a miracle by which I shall be whatever Guru's mind turns to. I shall be the countless words that enter Guru's ears and I shall become everything that touches his body too. I shall be the forms which my Guru's affectionate eyes see. I shall be the eatables which his tongue will savour and shall serve the nose by becoming a fragrance." (13:426-429).

Thus he feels that he should pervade all things to serve his Guru from outside as long as he lives. But he feels that even after death he should serve his Guru. Listen to how he thinks. (13:430-431).

He thinks, "Wherever the feet of my Guru touch, I shall mix the Earth principle of my body into that earth and where he will touch water I shall mix the water principle of my body into it. I shall mingle the Fire principle from my body into the light of the lamps used for waving around the Guru and those lighted in his temple. I shall merge the life principle into the fly-swap and the fan of my Guru and be the breeze that comforts his body. Whichever space my Guru goes with his entourage I shall introduce the part of my sky (space) principle in it. But on no account I shall allow the service of my Guru be interrupted whether during my life or after death and neither shall I let other people to serve my Guru. Eons will pass while I serve my Guru thus." (13:432-437).

He who holds such courage and serves his Guru with limitless devotion does not count days or nights nor the extent of burden, on the other hand he feels happier if Guru asks him to do more. Even if the tasks Guru tells him to do are bigger than the sky he carries them out single-handed. In this respect his body competes with his mind and completes the task. Sometimes he stakes even his life in order to fulfil Guru's commands even made in jest. He strains his body in Guru's service, gets strength from Guru's love and becomes the mainstay of Guru's orders. He derives respectability from his Guru's tradition and is polite to his brother disciples and is addicted to Guru's service. He considers the rules of his Guru's tradition as the prescribed duties for his caste

and devotional service to his Guru as his daily duty. To him, Guru is the place of pilgrimage, Guru is the deity, mother and father and there is nothing other than Guru's service. Guru's door is his everything and he has brotherly love for all who serve his Guru. He has the Mantra given by his Guru always on his tongue and except for his Guru's words he does not tough any Shastras. To him the water which his Gurus feet have touched are superior to all other holy waters from the three worlds. If by chance he gets leftover food from his Guru he prefers it to the bliss of Samadhi. Even a particle of dust raised when his Guru walks is like the bliss from liberation to him. There is no end to how much one can talk about his devotion to his Guru. (13:438-452).

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says,

"I am saying all this because I am overcome by feelings of devotion to my Guru. One who desires devotion does not ask anything other than Guru's service. He is the home of Self-realisation and because of him Knowledge itself gets respectability and considering him as God becomes his devotee. In such a person lies Knowledge sufficient for the whole world and to spare. I am extremely anxious about Guru's service and therefore I have described it extensively but I am handicapped in all respects in this regard. However the extreme love I have in my heart for my Guru compelled me to expand on this topic. I am praying him to accept it and give me an opportunity to serve him so that I shall be able to explain this book further in a better way." (13:453-460).

Purity : Shri Krishna continued, "Like camphor which is clean from outside as well as inside purity is seen in that sage both externally and internally. (13:462). From outside he has become pure by his actions and from inside by his Knowledge. (13:464). Arjuna, to keep the body clean without the internal purity is nothing but mockery. (13:468). If there is Knowledge in the mind then one automatically attains external purity. How otherwise can pure Knowledge and pure action be found together? Therefore Arjuna, he who has cleaned himself from outside by actions and inside by Knowledge is pure both from inside and outside. What more only purity remains in such a person. Pure feelings in the mind are reflected in the body. Even if he comes in contact with sense- objects through the sense-organs passions do not touch him. (13:473-479). When heart is pure, desires and doubts do not survive but one knows what is proper and improper. The mind of such a person does not get affected by doubts. Arjuna, this is called Purity and in whomsoever you see it know for sure that Knowledge also occurs in him. (13:482-484).

Steadfastness: A person in whom steadfastness occurs is the life of Knowledge. Even though the natural actions of his body go on externally his mind remains undisturbed internally. (13:485-486). His mind does not get discouraged by calamities. He is not tortured by poverty or pain nor does he tremble from fear and sorrow. And he is not frightened even by the approach of death. His straightforward mind does not waver even under pressure from hope or pain or by the rumblings of various diseases. (13:492- 494). His mind does not waver when he has to face slander, insult, punishment, desire, greed. (13:495-496).Arjuna, this state is what is

called steadfastness and whosoever has it ingrained in him is the treasure cove of Knowledge. (13:501). That sage takes care his mind and does not allow it to go near sense-objects. (13:504). He keeps a stern watch on the tendencies of his mind and deliberately controls his organs by self-control and self-restraint. Then by steadying himself in the three Bandhas. He fixes his consciousness in the central nerve Sushumna and steadies the meditation in Samadhi. Then his consciousness unifies with the Divine energy and merges in it. This is what is called controlled state of the mind. Knowledge is manifested where it occurs. He whose commands are respected by the mind is the Knowledge personified. (13:508-512).

Dispassion: And he is ever dispassionate in his mind regarding the sense-pleasures. (13:513). He does not even like the topic of sense-pleasures mentioned and does not permit the senses to come in contact with the sense-pleasures. His mind is apathetic to sense-pleasures and his body also becomes lean. Even then he likes Shama that is control of the mind and restraint of senses. He constantly performs penances and austerities and living among people is like a calamity to him. He likes to practice yoga and live in isolation, and he cannot stand crowds. (13:517-520).

He finds worldly pleasures and heavenly enjoyment distasteful. This kind of detachment from the sense-pleasures is a sign of Self-realisation. Understand that Knowledge resides in a person who has developed such dislike for worldly and heavenly pleasures. Like a man of desires, he performs yajnas, builds lakes, prepares gardens etc. for public but he does not carry the sense of pride of having done these things. (13:521-525).

He spares no efforts in performing his daily and incidental duties appropriate to his caste. But ego about having done them or that the performance was successful because his doing it, does not touch his mind. (13:526-527). This characteristics of his mind is called egoless-ness. There is no doubt that Knowledge occurs where this is fully evident. (13:534-535).

Awareness about evil of birth, death etc. : He observes caution even when birth, death, old age, pain, disease and sin are far away (536) and is careful to ensure that he is not reborn because he does not forget the pains of the previous births. He says to himself, " Alas! I am born through the mixing of semens with impure blood and came out through the urinary channel. Then I licked the sweat on the breast of my mother." Thus feeling disgusted about his he resolves not to do anything which will cause him to be reborn. (13:539-541). The sense of shame of having been born does not leave his mind. Even if death is very far away in future he is alert about it right from birth. (13:544-545). He lives with a dejected mind thinking of death. Having received the warning of the old age while in youth itself he listens to things worth hearing, visits places of pilgrimage, commits good quotations to memory and gives away wealth in charity before the organs become weak and useless. Because the mind may not remain pure after such a situation is reached, he ponders in detail on Self-realisation. (13:576-581).He who remembers that he is going to become old some day and takes steps by doing righteous actions while in youth itself before getting disabled by old age is to be considered as having Knowledge. (13:587).

Detachment **:** Now I shall tell you about one more strange characteristic of a man of Knowledge. He is very detached towards his body. He does not have any affinity for his home and feels detachment towards his wealth. He lives in the world respecting the precepts of Vedas. Such a person who does not keep desire towards wife, son and property is where Knowledge takes shelter. His mind does not waver by pain or pleasure and his sense of balance does not change. Understand that Knowledge actually exists in such a person. (13:594-603).

Liking for seclusion**:** He is resolved in his mind that there is nothing good in this world except Me. He has decided that there is no goal in this world other than Me and he has developed so much love for me that we both have become one. Even after becoming one with me he keeps on worshipping me with devotion in all sorts of ways. He who becomes one with me with dedication and worships me is Knowledge personified. He who likes to live at places of pilgrimage, holy river banks, excellent forests and caves, he who prefers to live in a cave in the mountains or on the shores of a lake and does not like living in cities, he who likes seclusion and dislikes living in villages is Knowledge in the guise of a person. I shall tell some more characteristics of Knowledge to explain its nature further. (13:604-615).

Certain that Knowledge leads to Self-realisation**:** He has decided with certainty that except for the Knowledge by which the entity called Supreme Soul may be experienced all other types of knowledge through which one gains the worldly life and heaven are all ignorance. He gives up the desire to gain a place in heaven, ignores the worldly matters and keeping his

attention in Self- realisation becomes engrossed in it. He directs his mind and intellect only towards Self-realisation. His intellect becomes steady with the definite understanding that Knowledge of the Self alone is real and knowledge of any other kind only leads to delusion. There is no doubt at all that Knowledge occurs in such a person. And once the Knowledge thus gets completely ingrained in his mind then becomes one with me. *But just as person who has just sat down cannot be said to have been sitting around similarly unless Knowledge becomes fixed in a person, he cannot be called a person of Knowledge.* Then he steadies his sights on the Brahman, the Object-to-be-known which is the fruit of gaining pure knowledge. If after gaining Knowledge one does not experience the Brahman then it is as good as not gaining the Knowledge. (13:616-626).

If the intellect cannot reach the Supreme Brahman in the light of Knowledge then it must be considered as blind. Therefore he gets the right desire of gaining that Knowledge by which he can see the Supreme Brahman wherever he casts his eyes and he finally gains that Knowledge. His intellect has developed as much as his Knowledge therefore no words are needed to tell that he is the Knowledge personified. Therefore one need not wonder at my saying that he whose intellect has met the Supreme Brahman in the light of Knowledge has become Knowledge. (13:627-633).

Thus Shri Krishna explained the eighteen characteristics of a person of Knowledge. He then said," Now I shall also reveal to you what is known as ignorance along with its characteristics. (13:653).

IGNORANCE

Understand that what is not Knowledge automatically becomes ignorance. I shall tell you some of its main signs. An ignorant person lives for status. He eagerly awaits honour and is pleased by felicitations. He who is stiff with pride and does not bend should be considered as the abode of ignorance. He brags about his religious actions and makes a big noise about his learning. He makes public announcements of his good deeds and all his actions are for getting prominence and greatness. He deceives his followers by external appearances by applying ash, sandal-paste etc. to the body. Understand that such a person is a mine of ignorance. (13:656-661).

Cruelty **:** He whose actions make the whole world suffer, whose casual words even prick like a spear and whose all plans are more dangerous than poison may be considered as possessing a lot of ignorance. His life is the home of violence. (13:662-664).

Slaves to emotions**:** He becomes elated by meeting his loved ones and depressed when they depart. He feels pleased by hearing his own praise and if he hears even slight criticism he becomes unhappy. He who cannot bear the onslaughts of mental emotions may be considered as completely ignorant. (13:665-668).

Secretive**:** His talk appears to be frank outwardly but actually he is very secretive. He shows friendship towards one but helps another. He somehow or other maintains good relations with straightforward type of persons and wins the minds of good people with an ultimate aim of harming them. It is a fact such a person has ignorance. (13:669-672).

***Disrespect for Guru*:** He is ashamed of his Guru tradition and he does not like to serve his Guru. He learns from his Guru but is disrespectful to him. To even utter the name of such person is like using the tongue to eat food from a Shudra (prohibited food) but I had to do it while telling you the characteristics of ignorance. Such a sin can be atoned by uttering the name of a Guru's devotee. (13:673-676).

***Doubts and Greed*:** An ignorant person who neglects his duties, has his mind full of doubts, is impure from inside and outside. Due to greed of wealth he does not care about whether it belongs to him or others. He is very loose regarding women. He does not feel shame if he misses the usual time for performing his prescribed actions or his incidental duties. He has no shame in doing sinful deeds and no liking for righteous deeds. His mind is always full of doubts and he always has his eyes on money. Understand that such a person is like a statue of ignorance. (13:678-684).

***Fickle-minded*:** He deviates from his resolves for the sake of personal gains. He gets shaken by frightful situations. He gets engrossed in flights of imagination. His mind gets totally lost by unpleasant news. He cannot remain steady in one place unless he falls down otherwise he goes on wandering. Such a person is full of ignorance. He is fickle-minded like a monkey and he does not have the strength of determination in him. He is not afraid of doing prohibited actions. He abandons penances halfway kicks away righteousness and does not bother about the rules of the rituals. He does not shun sinful actions and does not have liking for righteous actions. He tramples on the bounds of shame. He does not bother about family traditions and about

what is proper or improper. His mind is wanders unrestrained in thoughts of sense- pleasures. (13: 685-699). Such a person is rich in ignorance. (13:702).

***Passion-lover*:** He does not give up the desire for sense pleasures not only while he lives but after death also and makes preparations while he lives in order to attain heaven after death for the sake of pleasures there. He struggles incessantly for bodily pleasures. He prefers to actions where he can fulfil the desire of enjoying their fruits. If he sees a dispassionate saint he considers it as an impure incident and takes bath to clean himself. The sense pleasures may get tired of him but he does not get tired of them. (13:703-705). For their sake he will even jump in fire and goes around exhibiting this nature like an ornament. (13:707).

Infatuation with family : From birth until his death he incessantly toils for the pleasures and not minding the troubles he loves them more and more. He is infatuated with parents during childhood. When that is over he gets attracted during his youth to female body and while he is busy enjoying the marital life old age approaches when he directs that same love towards his children. Like a congenital blind person he spends all his time with his children but he never gets tired of the sense-pleasures until his death. There is no limit to ignorance in such a person. Now listen to some more characteristics of ignorance. (13:709-713).

***False pride and jealousy* :**He performs his duties sticking to the I- am-the-body impression and feels disturbed if there are any shortcomings in his performance. Proud of his youth and learning he goes around with stiff posture and says, " I alone am great

and rich. Who can compare his behaviour with mine?" He becomes stiff with the ego that there is none as great as himself, that he knows everything and that he is popular. (13:714-717).

He is jealous of virtuous persons, proud of his own learning and of the strength he has gained from penances and of his knowledge. You will see him swollen by pride. He does not bend nor feel kindness. Even virtuous persons cannot bring him to senses. I definitely tell you that ignorance of such a person is on the increase. (13:724-727).

Forgets birth-death cycles : Arjuna, he bothers about his household, body and wealth but not about his past and future births. (13:728). Even when the body is infected and the nine apertures of the body leak he does not regret the reasons due to which he has reached that state. He was simmering in filth for nine months in the cave of mother's womb he got but he neither remembers that discomfort nor the pains during the birth. He does not heel nauseated by seeing babies wallowing in faeces and urine and neither does he think about the fact that he has just finished his last lifetime and the next lifetime is approaching. Not only that he does not worry about death while the life progresses rapidly. He is so sure that he will continue to live that he refuses to accept the possible existence of death. (13:732-738).

While he is engrossed in sense-pleasures, he does not realise that death is approaching as he continues to remain alive. He considers as real only the growth of his body and the sense- pleasures but he does not realise that when a prostitute offers one everything that is where his destruction lies. (13:743-745). Engrossed in

eating and sleeping he does not realise that his destruction lies in the very same things. As time passes the body grows so does the indulgence in sense-pleasures and the shadow of death falls on life more and more but he does not see it approaching. He who cannot see the approaching death by getting engrossed in sense-pleasures is the king of the land of ignorance. (13:747-753).

Intoxicated by life he remains without care about the approaching old age. During youth he does not understand what would be his condition when he would become old. (13:754). Such a person is really ignorant. When he sees a lame or a bent person he mocks him but he does not think that he too is going to reach the same condition. And even when he attains old age which is the sign of approaching death delusion about his own youth does not leave him. Understand that such a person is without doubt an abode of ignorance. (13:760-763).

He who remains carefree when the enemy sleeps thinking that enmity is now over perishes along with his family. In the same way he does not bother about falling ill in future as long as his appetite and sleep are good and he is not ill at present. And in the company of his wife and children and growing affluence which intoxicates him he does not see that he is going to be separated one day from his sons etc. and his wealth. He who cannot see this future sorrow is ignorant. (13:767-770).

Indulgence **:** And he who lets the sense-organs go astray without restraint is also ignorant. In the prime of his youth supported by wealth he indulges in all sorts of

pleasures, whether proper or improper, does what should not be done, longs for the impossible, and thinks about things he should not think of. He enters where he should not, asks for what he should not take, touches things which he should not touch and does all the things one should not even think about. He goes to places where he should not go, sees what he should not see, eats what he should not eat and feels satisfied in it instead. He keeps company of those he should not, maintains relations with those he should not and behaves in a manner he should not behave. He listens to what he should not and blabbers about things about which he should not speak, but does not realise that he will be get the blame for it. He does things which please the body and the mind without thinking about their propriety. But the thought that it will result in his committing sin or he will have to suffer in hell does not enter his mind. Association with such a person leads to the spread of ignorance in the world to such an extent that it can even battle with sages. (13:771-780).

***Attachment to wife at the cost of parents*:** Now listen to some more characteristics. His attachment is totally towards his home and his wife and he cannot get his mind away from them. (13:781-783). He loves his home like as parents love an only child born in old age and he does not know anything other than his wife whose body he worships without any thought about, "Who I am?" or "What I should do?". Just as the mind of a great sage gets totally engrossed in Brahman resulting in stoppage of the worldly actions, an ignorant person surrenders himself completely to his wife and does not care for his losses, public shame or slander. He keeps himself in her good books and dances to her tunes. Like a greedy person toils for money even by

hurting his friends and relatives, he gives little to charity and does not do many righteous deeds. He cheats persons from his family and clan but gives his wife plenty fulfilling all her wants. He somehow manages to perform worship of his family deity, bluffs to his Guru. He tells his parents excuses that there is not enough money to give to them but brings various articles of pleasure and the best things he comes across for his wife. He serves his wife with unstinted dedication like a devotee lovingly devoted to his family deity. He gives the best and costly articles to his wife but for other persons in the family he does not give enough even for bare survival. If somebody gives improper looks to his wife or behaves with her improperly he feels as if the end of the world has come. He satisfies her every command. His wife is everything to him and he feels special love for children born of her. Whatever things she possesses and her wealth are more valuable to him than his own life. Such a person is the root of ignorance ant it gains strength from him. He is ignorance personified. (13:788-804).

Slave to pleasure and sorrows **:** He reaches the height of happiness when he gets the thing he likes and he sinks due to sorrow when he gets what he does not like. One who worries because of favourable and unfavourable circumstances, however highly intelligent he may be is in reality an ignorant person. (13:805-806). He is devoted to me but that devotion is with a material objective in mind. He makes a show of my devotion but keeps his sights on pleasures. If he does not get them after being devoted to me, then he gives up the devotion saying that the talk of God etc. is all lies. Like an ignorant peasant he sets up different deities and after failing with one he goes to the next. He joins that

Guru tradition where there is a great pomp and show, receives Guru-mantra from him and considers others as ordinary. He behaves cruelly with living creatures but showers special love on a stone idol. But his love is not steady in one single place. He makes my idol and installs it in one corner of the house and himself he goes on pilgrimage to places of other deities. He offers devotion towards his family deity and on auspicious occasions he worships other deities. After installing me in the house he makes vows to other deities. On the day of Shraddha he belongs to the forefathers. He worships cobras on Nagpanchami day as much as he worships me on Ekadashi day. On Chaturthi day he becomes a devotee of Ganapati and on Chaturdashi day he avers, " Oh Mother Durga, I am a devote of only you." He leaves the daily rituals and incidental actions during Navaratri and sits for the reading of Navachandi and on Sunday gives an offering of Khichadi to the deity Bahiroba. Then on Monday he rushes to Shivalinga for offering Bel leaves and thus he somehow manages the perform the worship ritual of all deities. That devotee performs the worship ritual of all deities without taking rest for a moment just like a prostitute who demonstrates her love for all the people in the town. Such a devotee who every now and then rushes to different deities is ignorance reincarnated. (13:810-823).

***Dislikes quiet and holy places*:** And he also is ignorant who feels disgusted at the sight of quiet forests meant for penance, places of pilgrimage. He who feels happy living in the town, likes to sit in a crowd and likes to gossip is nothing but ignorant. (13:824- 825).

Prefers black arts to holy knowledge : Such a person, who has only book-knowledge, laughs at the real knowledge which leads to Self- realisation. He does not look at Upanishads. He does not like the science of yoga and his mind does not turn towards spiritual science. His mind wanders here and there like a wayward cattle demolishing the wall of intellect tending towards the thoughts of Soul. He is clever in the ritualistic technique. He knows the Puranas by heart and he is such an expert astrologer that whatever he predicts happens. He is skilled in sculpture and architecture expert in culinary art. And he knows the mantras from Atharvaveda (Black magic, charm, voodoo etc.). There is nothing more left for him to learn in the science of love. He gives discourses on Mahabharata and other branches of knowledge stand attentively before him in person. He is skilled in medicine and there is none who is more well-versed than him. He discusses Smritis. He knows the secret of snake-charming and he has mastery on the vocabulary of Vedas. He is expert in grammar and learned in science of justice. But only regarding the knowledge of the self he is congenital blind. He may be considered as an authority on the principles of every branch of science but that is all in vain which is like a child born at an inauspicious time (unlucky for his father). Ignore him. (13:826-835).

Except for the spiritual science, all other branches of knowledge are meaningless. Therefore Arjuna, remember that a person with only book-knowledge is a fool who has not realised the Self. His body has grown out of the seed of ignorance and his learning is a creeper of this ignorance. Whatever he speaks is the flower of ignorance and whatever righteous path he

practices is the fruit of the ignorance too. Is there any need of telling that one who does not believe in Knowledge of the Self has not understood its meaning?. (13:839-843). How can a person who is not acquainted with Knowledge of the Self can find its subject matter that is the Soul? One need not make complicated arithmetic to tell that a person does not understand the principles of Knowledge. (13:846-847).

Turn your back to ignorance The characteristics of ignorance are contained in the eighteen characteristics of knowledge I had explained to you earlier. earlier. The characteristics of Knowledge when applied in reverse become the characteristics of ignorance. (13:849-851).

Arjuna, turn your back to the characteristics of ignorance which I have just told you and make a good and firm resolve regarding Knowledge. By means of that pure Knowledge you will realise its object namely the Brahman. (13:862-863).

OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

Now I shall tell you about the object of Knowledge. Brahman is called the object of Knowledge because it cannot be achieved by any means other than Knowledge and after it is attained there is nothing left for the sage to be done further because the Knowledge unifies him with itself. After its attainment the seeker gives up worldly matters and remains immersed in the bliss of the Brahman. That Object is such that it has no beginning and naturally it is called Supreme Brahman. If one goes to deny its existence then one can see it in the form of the universe; and if one goes to say that universe itself is the Supreme Brahman then it is

illusion (Maya) because it does not have form, colour or shape. Also it is not visible and neither it can see. Then how can anyone say that it exists? And if its existence is denied then wherefrom have the principles like Mahat etc. have sprung? The speech became dumb because one cannot at all affirm or deny its existence and even the thought about it could not proceed further. Just as earth is seen in the form of a pot similarly Brahman has taken the form of the universe and has pervaded it throughout. (13:865-873).

It fills all places all the time and is not different from place and time. The very actions performed by gross and subtle things are its hands. Therefore Brahman has been called ***Vishwa-Bah*** or hands of the universe because it inspires actions everywhere, all the time and in all ways. And it is present everywhere at the same time therefore it is called ***Vishwataspat*** i.e. having feet everywhere. Like the sun it observes all forms by its light therefore even if it does not have eyes, Vedas have cleverly called it ***Vishwachakshu*** or eyes of the universe. It is present always and everywhere on everyone's head therefore it is called ***Vishwamurdha*** or intellect of the universe. The form of fire is its mouth because it accepts all things through the fire therefore Vedas have called Brahman as ***Vishwatomukh*** or mouth of the universe. And its ears engulf all sounds just as space engulfs all objects and it is because of this that we call Brahman as "one which listens everywhere". It is because of its all- pervasiveness that this simile has been used otherwise how can one speak in terms of hands, feet, eyes etc. about something which is the essence of void or nothing?. How can there be the sense of pervader and pervaded in the Brahman which is everywhere? But this differentiation had to be made

in order to explain what the Brahman is. Just as for indicating zero or nothing one writes a small dot similarly to explain monism one has to use dualism. If this is not done then all dialogue between Guru and disciple will stop. It is for this reason that it has been customary to explain non-dualism using the language of dualism. (13:874-890).

HOW BRAHMAN PERVADES OBJECTS

Now listen to how Brahman pervades objects which are visible to the eyes. (13:891). That Brahman appears to be in all objects (like for example the water or liquid principle which occurs in water). (13:895). Because of the shape of the pot the sky appears to be round or because a hut is rectangular, the sky also looks rectangular but the sky does not have any shape, round or rectangular. Similarly though objects have attributes the Brahman which pervades them does not have attributes. That Brahman appears to be like mind and other organs or like the three attributes but just as sweetness of jaggery does not lie in the shape of its block the mind and attributes are not real Brahman. (13:898-901). In plain words it is different from the mind and the attributes. The relations between name and form and the differences in duties for different castes are applicable to the form and not to the Brahman. Brahman is not the same as attributes and it is not related to attributes but there is an illusion of their appearing in it. (13:904-907). Therefore the ignorant think that the attributes belong to the Brahman. The attributeless Brahman holds the attributes without any relation with them but that is only an illusion and not real. Therefore one should not mention attributes in relation to the Brahman. (13:910-912).

Same Brahman pervades all Though Brahman exists in all moving and non-moving objects it is the same entity. That which is indestructible and pervades the entire universe is the Object-to-be Known. That which is inside the body as well as outside, is near as well as far and is unique without duality, totally pervades everything. (13:913-915). Its pervasion is as a single entity without break in all four types of beings namely born through sex, eggs, sweat and seeds. It is also the cause of the creation of the universe. (13:917,920). Therefore just as the waves are supported by the sea, so is the universe supported by Brahman. At the time of creation we call it Brahmadeo, during sustenance we properly call it Vishnu and when the universe dissolves we call it Rudra. And when all the three attributes vanish we call it cipher (zero). And that which swallows the nothingness of space and destroys the three attributes is the great cipher as agreed by Upanishads. (13:921-926).

Brahman - the basic principle in all principles That Brahman is the igniting principle in the fire, nectar of life the moon provides to the plants and the power of sight by which the sun oversees the affairs of the world. The galaxies of stars brighten by its light and by its brightness the sun easily spreads in the universe. It is the root of the origin, growing of the growth, intelligence of the intellect and life-force of life. It is mental power of the mind, vision of the eyes, hearing of the ears, power of speech of the tongue, vitality of life-force, feet of the motion, activity of the action. Formation, growth and destruction occur by its power. The five principles earth, water, air, fire and space derive their characteristics from it. In short all objects appear in the universe because of it and actually

everything is Brahman and no duality exists. Once it is experienced, the seer and the seen, The means and the end become one and the difference between Knowledge, the object of the knowledge and the Knower vanishes. One cannot speak of duality in its context and it exists in the heart of all. (13:927-939)

Thus I have made clear to you what Field is. Also I explained to you what Knowledge is. That I discussed the characteristics of ignorance and now I have explained to you what Object-to-be-known is by analytical reasoning. (13:940-943).

Easiest method to attain me Arjuna, my devotees come to me longing for my attainment after thinking about all these things. By giving up the attachment to the body the concentrate their mind and feelings on me. These devotees, after they know me take me in exchange for their ego and thus become one with me. I have thus planned the easiest method for being one with me. (13:944-947).

PURUSH AND PRAKRITI (SANKHYA)

Arjuna, if I had merely told you that Soul is everywhere then you would not have believed it. Therefore considering that you are dull-witted I explained to you the same Brahman in four parts. Considering your ability to concentrate I divided the Brahman into four parts namely the Field, Knowledge, Object-to-be-known and Ignorance. If even after this you have not understood my explanation then I shall explain the same thing to you in another way. Instead of dividing into four parts I shall divide into only two parts namely Soul and Non-soul (Purush and Prakriti). Listen to it. (13:949-955).

I shall tell you about the two parts Prakriti and Purush. Yogis call this path "Sankhya" for explaining which I have incarnated as Kapil. Listen to the pros and cons of it. (13:957- 959).

Purush is without beginning and so is Prakriti and they are both stuck to each other like day and night or like a shadow to a form. What I explained to you as Field must be understood here as Prakriti and the Knower of the Field is the same as Purush. Even if the names are different the principles to which they refer are the same. (13:960-964). Purush is the power and Prakriti is the one which causes all actions to take place. Intellect, organs and mind etc. which are responsible for feelings and passions and the three attributes Sattva, Raja and Tama, all arise from Prakriti and are the cause of creation of Karma. (13:966-968).

Creation of Ego Desire and intellect first create ego in Prakriti and make the individual involved in some cause. The procedures used for achieving a desired object is called action. When desire becomes strong it activates the mind and makes it gets the tasks done through the organs and that is what is called the effect of the Prakriti. Therefore Prakriti is the root of the action, cause and effect. When the trio comes together the Prakriti becomes active but the nature of its actions is governed by the three attributes. The action in which the Sattva attribute predominates is a good righteous action. That which is takes place due to Raja attribute is a medium or mixed type of action and that which takes place due to Tama attribute is a prohibited and unrighteous action. The good and bad actions thus occur due to Prakriti and gives rise to pleasure and pain respectively. This pleasure and pain are experienced by

the Purush. As long as this pleasure and pain appears real the Prakriti remains busy in creating them and the Purush in experiencing them. The affairs of this couple Prakriti and Purush are strange. Whatever the wife earns the husband enjoys without himself making any efforts. This couple does not come together and yet Prakriti the wife gives birth to this universe. (13:969-980).

Actionless Purush and Gunamayi Prakriti He who is without form (body) and actionless (cripple), without attributes (wealth), unique and older than the oldest of the objects is called Purush. Nothing can be said about whether he is female or a neuter. He does not have eyes, ears, hands, feet, form, colour and name. He has no organs. Such is the husband of Prakriti who has to experience pain and pleasure. Though he is actionless, unattached and non-indulgent, the Prakriti makes him experience the pain and pleasure. This Prakriti uses her form and attributes to create a strange drama therefore the Prakriti is called Gunamayi or one having attributes. She ever takes a new form every moment and its vitality makes even the passive objects active. Because of her names are assigned, love is felt and sense-organs are able to sense. She makes mind even though it is neuter (cannot create anything?), to wander in the three worlds. Such is her capability. (13:981-990).

Play of Prakriti**:** This Prakriti which is like a big island of illusion, which pervades everything, has created emotions. Passions are fostered with her support. Delusion blooms because of her. She is known as divine Maya. (13:991-992).

She makes the language grow, creates this material world, and ceaselessly invades it with materialistic way of life. All arts, skills are born of her. Desires, knowledge and actions are created from her. All the tunes and sounds are minted out by her. She is the home of miracles. In fact everything that happens in the world is her play. The creation of the world and its dissolution are her morning and evening respectively. She is thus the wonderful illusionist. (13:993-996).

She is the mate of the lonely Purush, companion of the unattached (Brahman) and she resides in the void. Her capability is so high that she keeps the uncontrollable Purush under control. Actually the Purush is not attached to anything but this Prakriti becomes everything for him. She becomes the creation of the self- born, form of the formless Purush and his very existence and base. (13:997-1000).

Illusion of attributes Thus, by her strength Prakriti creates passions in that dispassionate Purush and his effulgence wanes like that of the moon on the new moon day. (13:1005-1008). Once the Purush surrenders to the Prakriti its brightness vanishes and he has to experience the effect of the attributes. By association with her he has to suffer the impact of birth and death. When moonlight is reflected in moving water, people see many reflections and feel that there are many moons. Similarly by association with attributes it appears as if the birthless Purush takes birth but that is not true. Just as a Sanyasi sees in his dream that he is born in a Shudra caste similarly the Purush feels that he has taken birth in a low or high caste but that is not true and therefore the Purush does not have to experience

the effects of Karmas. It only appears to him so because of the association with the attributes. (13:1014-1021).

Purush is beyond Prakriti Prakriti has the support of the Purush but there is a vast difference between the two. This Purush is on the bank of the river that is Prakriti and though his reflection is in the river it is not carried away by the current. Prakriti is created and is dissolved but Purush is eternal. Therefore he controls everything right from Brahmadeo downwards. Prakriti exists because of him and by his power alone she creates the world therefore he is the Lord of Prakriti. The world which has been going on since endless past dissolves in him at the end of the aeon. He is the Lord of the great Brahman that is the Prakriti. He controls the whole universe and envelops it entirely by his expanse. Really speaking he is the Supreme Soul which is said to exist in the body. (13:1022-1029).

One who understands that this Purush is one and the only one and all the actions and attributes belong to the Prakriti, that Purush and Prakriti are like the form and the shadow or like water and mirage, may be considered as having understood the difference between Purush and Prakriti. Even if he performs action by virtue of possessing a body, does not get tainted by them. He does not feel attachment to his body while he lives and when he dies is not reborn. In this unworldly way the understanding of the difference between Purush and Prakriti becomes favourable to him. There are many ways by which this understanding will arise in your heart. Listen. (13:1030-1036).

PURIFICATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Some people purify gold that is the Soul (which is tainted by attributes) in the fire of thought by coating it with layers of listening, pondering and longing for it, and burning away the impurity of the worldly attributes. By burning the thirty-six impure principles they separate away the pure Soul and see it by the eyes of meditation within themselves. Some meditate on it using the principles of Sankhya philosophy or by the philosophy of action and attain liberation. (13:1037-1040).

Thus people adopt different ways to get safely out of this whirlpool of life and death. But there are others who by ridding themselves of pride keep faith in Guru's words. They listen attentively and respectfully to whatever the Guru says and offer themselves and all their possessions to the him. Guru cares about what is good and bad for them, feels for their miseries and mitigates them, makes them feel relaxed and happy by inquiring after them. They keep aside all their work in order to be able to hear his words and are prepared to sacrifice their life for him. Such people also finally cross the ocean of the birth-death cycles. Thus in this world of mortals there are many ways to experience the Supreme Soul. I shall present you with the cream of the philosophy of these methods. (13:1041-1050).

INTERACTION OF FIELD AND THE KNOWER

The entire world is created from the mutual interaction of the "Field" and the "Knower of the Field" both of which I explained to you. (13:1051-1052). All the movable and immovable things and the entity which we call "Jiva" or "life" is created out of the union of these

two. Therefore materials or persons are not different from Purush. (13:1055-1056).

Even though cloth is not same as thread it is made of it. In the same way one should see by insight the sameness between Purush and the material world i.e. the Prakriti. You should experience the fact that all creatures are different forms of the same entity and they are basically the same. Their names are different, their behaviour also is different and they appear different outwardly but if by these considerations you sustain in your mind the idea that they are all different then you will not escape from this birth and death cycles in a million years. Individuals may have crooked shapes but the Soul is straight. Even though there are piles of lives the soul inside all of them is same. The physical appearance of individuals is illusive and destructible but the souls inside all of them is indestructible. Thus, he who understands that soul is not different from the individual but does not possess the attributes of the individual is the man of vision among all men of Knowledge and the most fortunate of men. (13:1057-1068).

MAN OF KNOWLEDGE IS LIBERATED WHILE IN BODY

This body made up of the five principles and full of wind, biles and phlegm is like a horrible bag full of the three attributes and the organs. It is plainly a scorpion with five sting-tails. It is burning in five types of fire and in this cage of the body that is the lion that is the individual is entrapped. Even though the body is like this the soul is indestructible. Arjuna, only a man of Knowledge does not harm himself even though he lives

in the body and ultimately reaches the state of the Brahman. To attain that state, yogis by the power of their knowledge of yoga, cross millions of births and leave their body deciding that they will not be reborn. The Supreme Brahman which is beyond the name and form and is in the realm of vibrations (sound) is the final resting place of all destinations including that of liberation. He who does not permit ideas of differences between individuals due to their external differences in appearance experiences the bliss of the Brahman while he is still alive in his body. Just as same light emanates from different lamps the souls pervades everything right from the beginning. Arjuna, he who has this outlook of equality is not caught in the throes of birth-death cycles. He is very fortunate and I sing his praises often because he looks at everything with eyes of equality. (13:1069-1079).

And he fully knows that it is Prakriti which causes actions through mind, intellect, the five sense-organs and five organs of action. (13:1080). That Prakriti aided by the three attributes sets up different kinds of acts in the light of the Soul but the soul itself remains steady and unaffected by it. He who has decided that this is so has realised the soul. (13:1082-1083).

Even otherwise Arjuna, he who sees unity in the diverse shapes of living beings, consider him as having attained Brahman. (13:1084). When one is certain in his mind that all creatures are created from the same Soul, then it can be said that he has found the boat that is the wealth of the Brahman (for crossing the ocean of birth and death cycles). Everywhere he casts his eyes he sees all is full of Brahman. He attains endless bliss. Thus you should completely know by experience the arrangement

of Prakriti and Purush. The benefit you have gained is similar to an opportunity to gargle with nectar. (13:1087-1090). Now I am going to tell you one or two more profound ideas. (13:1092)

SOUL LIVES IN BODY AS A PROJECTION

What is known by the name Supreme Soul, even though it exists in the body, always remains in its pure state. (13:1094). Actually it is not correct to say that Soul resides in the body. The soul is said to be in the body in the same way as when one looks at one's face in the mirror and say it is his face. It is totally meaningless to say that soul is related to the body. (13:1096- 1098). Body is strung in the thread of the five principles and it rotates in the wheel of birth and death. This body is like a ball of butter inserted in the mouth of the fire that is Time. It vanishes in the short span of time that a fly takes to flutter its wings. If he falls in fire it turns to ashes and if it falls prey to a dog then it turns to fecal matter. If it escapes these two then a bunch of worms is created in it. Thus the this body comes to a disgusting end. Though the body reaches this fate the soul is eternal, self-illuminating, self-sufficient and beginningless. (13:1103-1107).

Because it is without attributes it is neither without phases nor can it be said that it has phases. It is neither active nor without action, neither fat nor thin, neither visible nor invisible, neither bright nor dull neither less nor much. Because it is a void it is neither full nor empty. It is in no way without company nor it has company. It is neither shapeless nor does it have shape. Since it has the form of self it has neither bliss nor sorrow. It is neither one nor many. It is neither free nor

bound. It is without characteristics it is neither this much nor that much, neither ready-made nor prepared, neither able to speak nor dumb. It is not born along with the creation of the universe and does not get destroyed when it gets destroyed. It is the place of dissolution of being and not being. It is dimensionless therefore it cannot be measured or described. It neither grows nor diminishes, fades or gets exhausted. Such is the nature of the Soul. It is unbroken therefore it neither takes the form of the body nor rejects it but remains as it was. Just as days and nights occur in the sky so do bodies are acquired and given up by this soul. Therefore he does not do anything in the body nor cause it to be done nor does it get involved in any of the affairs of the body. But nothing happens to its nature. Not only that, even though it is in the body it is unattached to it. Though Soul is in all bodies it does not get stained by its characteristics. I am telling you again and again to take into consideration the characteristics of the Soul that the Knower of the Field is different from the Field. (13:1108-1119, 1121-1122).

A magnet by its proximity moves iron but iron is not the same as magnet. The same principle is applicable to the Soul and the body. There is fire hidden inside wood but wood is not fire, and Soul has to be viewed in the same way. Just as the sun is alone in the sky but illuminates the whole world in the same way the Soul illuminates all the living bodies. (13:1123-1128)

The intellect which understands the difference between the Field and the Knower of the Field is the intellect with real sight. It alone can assimilate the essence of the meaning of the words. It is for understanding the difference between the Field and the Knower of the

field that the wise persons frequent the abodes of sages. It is for that alone that the intellectuals acquire the valuable peace and study Shastras. It is foe that knowledge that men practice yoga with high ambitions. And some people by taking the body and other worldly matters insignificant respectfully serve the saints. Thus they shed their worries by following different paths of knowledge. I surrender my knowledge to the knowledge of those who understand the difference between the Field and Knower of the Field. (13:1129-1135)

And they know the real nature of this Prakriti or Maya which is spread everywhere in different forms and manifestations like the five principles. (13:1136). Those who are convinced in their heart that Prakriti is different from the Purush have attained Brahman. (13:1140). The Brahman is more extensive than sky, it is the outer border of Prakriti and after attaining it the feelings of similarity or dissimilarity vanish. Shape, feeling of being alive and duality vanish in It and it remains as one and only one Supreme Principle. This Supreme Principle is attained by those who understand that the Purush and Prakriti are different. (13:1140-1143).

CHAPTER 14

THE THREE ATTRIBUTES

QUESTION ABOUT HOW SOUL EXPERIENCES PAIN ETC.

In the thirteenth chapter Shri Krishna told Arjuna that the universe is created through the union of the Field and the Knower of the Field (i.e. *Purusha* and *Prakriti*), and by association with the three attributes the soul becomes involved in the worldly affairs. The soul when it comes in the grips of *Prakriti* experiences pleasure and pain but if it gets rid of the three attributes then it becomes liberated. (14:32-34).

Now, how does the non-attached soul gets attached to Prakriti? What is the meaning of the union of soul and *Prakriti* (Knower of the field and the Field)? How does the soul experience pleasure and pain? What are these attributes and how many are they? How can these attributes be wound up? What are the characteristics of a person who is beyond the attributes? The discussion of these points form the subject matter of the fourteenth chapter. (14:35-37)

MEANING OF *PARA*

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, I explained to you in many different ways what Knowledge is, but you do not seem to have experienced it so far. Therefore I shall explain to you once again the meaning of the word *Para* which is well-known in the *Shrutis*." (14:39-41).

Para the supreme knowledge Other branches of Knowledge do not extend their scope beyond the world and heaven. But the Knowledge of the Self goes beyond that therefore the term *Para* has been used in its context. It is because of this that I call the Knowledge of the Self as the best Knowledge. Compared to it the rest of the knowledge is like grass in presence of fire. The knowledge which recognises only the world and heaven, which considers only Yajnas and rituals as the best and which is not acquainted with anything other than duality, appears entirely like a dream in front of this Knowledge of the Self. (14:42-45). Once the Knowledge of the Self rises all other types of knowledge vanish therefore Arjuna, I call it the best. The liberation which is within us right from the beginning comes into our reach due to this Knowledge. Once it is experienced the brave thinkers do not let worldly thoughts enter their minds anymore. Those who have controlled their mind with the help of the mind itself and have become relaxed and at peace go beyond the bodily affairs while still in the body. They cross the bounds of the body and become one with me. (14:47-51).

Arjuna, they are eternal like me and have reached perfection, Just as I am infinite, blissful and ultimate truth, they also become so. (14:52-54). The feeling of "you" and "I" that is the feeling of duality vanishes and everybody exists at the same level. Therefore whenever the entire universe gets reborn, these Self-realised persons do not have to be reborn. How can those who do not get caught in the bounds of the body at the time of creation of the universe die at the time of its dissolution? Therefore Arjuna those who, with the

help of Knowledge of the Self have attained me have gone beyond the birth-death cycles. (14:56-59).

HOW THREE ATTRIBUTES TRAP ME

Now I shall tell you how, despite my being one and only one, the trappers in the form of the three attributes entangle me in the traps of different bodies and how I create this universe with the help of Prakriti. (14:64-65).

Prakriti : Prakriti is called the Field because it gives rise to the harvest of living creatures by the seed of the union with me. (14:64-66). Since it is the place where *Mahat* and other principles reside it is also called *Mahatbrahma* (Universe of *Mahat* etc.). It strengthens passions therefore it is *Mahatbrahma*. People who believe that universe is not expressible call it "*Unmani* fest" while the Sankhyas call it *Prakriti*. Vedantis call it *Maya*. But why talk more about it? It is the same as what is called Ignorance. This Ignorance is the very entity due to which we forget our real Self. It vanishes once we start thinking about the nature of our Self. (14:67-72). Sometimes a person cannot make up his mind whether what he is seeing is a pole or man but he is aware he is seeing something, similarly he is not sure whether what he realises is Soul (Brahman) or not. Just as at the time of twilight in the evening it is neither day nor night similarly Ignorance is neither true knowledge and nor contrary knowledge but the middle stage of doubt about the Soul. And the Soul entangled in Ignorance is called the Knower of the Field (individual). Forgetting the real Self and increasing the ignorance is the characteristic of the Knower of the Field. Understand properly that this is the yoga or

union of the Field and Knower of the Field. This union is the basic nature of the Self. Thus, by union with the Field the Knower of the Field or individual forgets due to ignorance its original form and takes different forms. (14:76- 82).

What is world Whatever one observes after the eyes shift from the form of the Self is called the world and that world is created out of me. A person though alone sees several things in his dream by delusion and what happens when an individual forgets his Self is similar. I shall explain the same principle in another way. (14:83-86).

Outcome of Ignorance This ignorance of the Self is my wife and she is young, beginningless and with indescribable qualities. She does not possess a specific form. Her expanse is very large. She lives near ignorant persons and far away from persons of Knowledge. She is awake when I am asleep and becomes pregnant through the union with the power of the Self. In her womb grow the foetuses of the eight types of passions. (14:87-90).

Birth of the universe From the union of the Self and the *Prakriti* first the intellect is born and from the intellect mind is born. The young wife of the mind namely the affection gives birth to the ego and from ego are born the five principles. The sense-objects and the sense organs being naturally parts of the five principles are also created along with them. When passions develop the three attributes also raise their head and start spreading through the seed of desires. Just as a seed coming in contact with water sprouts and becomes a tree similarly, as soon as Maya becomes united with

me it sprouts shoots of various types of the universe. Listen to how that foetus takes shape. From it are formed the four types of creatures namely oviparous i.e. those born through eggs, from sweat e.g. lice etc., through seeds i.e. plants and through uterus. The foetus having more of the sky and wind principle is called the oviparous foetus. Foetus possessing Tama and Raja attributes and with more of the water and fire principle is the foetus which creates life through sweat. Foetus having more of the water and earth principle and which is created from the inferior Tama attribute is the non-moving foetus born of seed. The foetus which is aided by the five sense organs and five organs of action and with further support from mind and intellect is the uterine foetus. (14:91-102).

Thus *Maya* gave birth to a child whose arms and legs are the four types of foetuses, the eight-fold *Prakriti* its head, activism its protruding belly, renunciation its straight back, the eight species of the deities the parts of the body above the navel, the blissful heaven its throat, the mortal world the trunk and netherworld the part below the waist. The expanse of the three worlds is the baby's plumpness. The 8.4 million species are the joints of the bones. The child began to grow steadily. Many bodies are the various parts of its body. *Maya* started decorating it with ornaments of different names every day and fostering it on the milk of delusion. Different worlds are its fingers which she adorned with rings of different bodies. Thus the delusive beautiful *Prakriti* became swollen with pride having given birth to the only child that is the living and non-living universe. Brahmadeo, Vishnu and Mahesh are respectively the morning, noon and evening of this child. By setting up this play of the universe the child

sleeps on the bed of the delude and when the new aeon starts wakes up again with the ignorance of the Self. Thus this child steps around happily in the house of the ignorance of the Self according to the passage of the different eras. Will is its friend and ego its playmate. This child dies only due to Knowledge of the Self. Maya gave birth to the universe with the help of my power therefore I am the father, *Maya* is the mother and this huge world is our child. (14:103-116)

Diversity Though you see diverse types of bodies do not consider the differences among them because mind, intellect etc. are the same among them. (?) Just as the same body has different organs similarly the diverse kind of universe has arisen from a single entity. The world and I have a mutual relation similar to a tree though grown out of a single seed has different types of branches some short, some long and some bent. (14:117-119). Just as fire and flames are the two forms of the same fire in the same way I and the world are the same therefore to imagine a relation between us two is not correct. If one says that creation of the world shadows my form then the question is who appears in the form of the world? (14:122-123). If you try to see me by moving the world aside then it is not possible because I am in the form of the universe. Arjuna let this principle be fixed in your mind. Now even if I show my forms in different bodies consider that it is I who am bound in them by different attributes. Is one who is afraid of the own shadow different from it? Therefore consider the binding by which I became many by assuming innumerable bodies. This binding does not remain after one experiences me but this is not realised because of one's ignorance. Therefore Arjuna, listen to which attributes lead to which type of bindings,

how many attributes are there, what are their properties and what are their nature and names and how they came into existence. (14:135-137).

THREE ATTRIBUTES

Sattva, Raja and *Tama* are the names of the three attributes and they arise from *Prakriti*. Out of these the *Sattva* attribute is the best, *Raja* attribute is medium and the *Tama* attribute is inferior. These three attributes may be seen in the same nature. (14:138-140). The nature that develops when ignorance is embraced gets not only the *Sattva* and *Raja* attributes but the *Tama* attribute as well. Arjuna, I will tell you how these attributes bind a person. (14:143-144).

The time when a soul reaches the status of an individual (i.e. is born) by adopting the I-am-the-body attitude is an inauspicious moment. From birth until death he imagines the functions of the body as his own. (14:145-146).

Sattva attribute The *Sattva* attribute traps the individual by the strings of pleasure and learning. The learned individual roars due to vanity and kicks around due to conceit and loses the bliss of the Self-realisation. He feels elated when people honour him for his learning. He feels happy by small gains and he brags around that very little satisfies him. He says how fortunate he is to have none as happy as himself. He is flooded with the eight righteous *Sattva*-attributed emotions. As if this is not enough, another binding in the form of the pride of his being learned trails him. He does not feel sorry that he has lost the realisation of his being the Soul. On the contrary he swells with pride of his worldly knowledge. (14:147-153).

The soul in the body, because of worldly outward knowledge considers himself as the body. He knows the art of handling worldly affairs and becomes expert in the rituals of yajnas. His knowledge can take him up to heaven and he thinks that currently there is none as knowledgeable as he is and that he alone is clever. In this way the *Sattva* attribute pulls this lame individual like bull with the reins of pleasure and learning. (14:154-158).

Raja attribute Now I shall tell you about how the *Raja* attribute also binds the individual. It always keeps him amused and his passions remain ever alive therefore it is called Raja attribute. If it enters even slightly in an individual it keeps him infatuated with passions and that individual rides on lust. Just as fire flares up when ghee is poured into it and burns big and small things, similarly his desire becomes wild because of which painful things appear to him as pleasure giving. He feels dissatisfied even with the wealth of gods. After desires for sense objects have thus grown, even if a mountain as large as Meru comes in his possession he feels that he should get something still bigger. He is prepared to sacrifice his life even for a penny. He considers himself lucky even if he gains a piece of straw. Worried by what would happen to him if the wealth he possesses gets squandered he starts big industries. Then worried that he may not be able to get anything to eat in heaven he performs Yajnas and vows, He builds wells and lakes for the public use. He does not do any penances except with the idea of getting some desire fulfilled. Thus he keeps himself busy day and night in such activities. (14:159-168).

A fish or the glances of a pretty woman are quick and fickle and the lightning is still more so but that is nothing compared with the speed and fickleness of the *Raja* Attribute. With that speed he jumps into the fire of actions with the hope of gains in this world and to gain heaven. Thus the individual who is separate from the body while being in it puts the shackles in his legs and gets his neck in the noose of struggle for actions. Thus the individual who resides in the body has a strong binding of Raja attribute. (14:170-173).

Tama attribute Now listen to the characteristics of *Tama* attribute. Tama attribute is that which veils the practical view of a person as if the sky is covered by dark clouds of delusion, which grows by ignorance, and makes the whole world dance with delusion, of which thoughtlessness is the password and which is the pot of honey of ignorance which keeps individuals under illusion. This *Tama* attribute chains those who consider the body itself to be the soul. Once it starts growing in the living and non-living world it does leave scope there for anything else. It brings heaviness to all organs and makes the mind dull and gives shelter to laziness. The body becomes shaky because of it. A person loses all desire to work goes and starts yawning again and again. He cannot see anything even with open eyes and even when nobody has called him he gets up like a demented person and responds. Once he lies down and sleeps he does not even turn over. He has no desire to get up even if heavens fall. Once he sits quietly he forgets what is proper or improper because his tendency is to stay as he is without moving. He sits in the hopeless pose either with his hands on the forehead or his head in between his knees. He likes sleep so much that when he is sleepy even heaven is bothersome to

him. He does not have any vice other than wishing that he should be accorded the long life of Brahmadeo which he should spent entirely in sleep. If he slips and falls down while walking he sleeps in that state there itself and once he is asleep he refuses even nectar. Similarly if he is forced to work he becomes blind with anger. He does not think about how he should behave with others or talk with them or if he is likely to gain anything or not. He is sometimes ventures to commit some bravery but his tendency is to do something that should not be done. He likes making mistakes. Thus the *Tama* attribute binds the free individual with the three tentacles of sleep, lethargy and mistakes. The individual is thus caught in the tentacles of the attributes and thinks that their characteristics belong to him. (14:174-193).

EFFECT OF PREDOMINANCE

When the *Sattva* attribute grows more than the *Raja* and *Tama* attributes the individual thinks he is happy. When *Sattva* and *Raja* attributes wane and the strength of *Tama* increases the individual is easily prone to committing mistakes. Similarly when *Raja* predominates over *Sattva* and *Tama* that individual, the king of the body thinks that there is nothing better than action. (14:199- 202).

Predominance of Sattva Now listen to how the attributes grow. The signs which are apparent when the *Sattva* attribute grows in the body after conquering the *Raja* and *Tama* are as follows. He is full of knowledge which can be seen from outside by his appearance itself. All his organs are able to discriminate and in fact even limbs are able to see. The organs themselves

discern what is good or bad and are in control. The ears do not hear what should not be heard, eyes do not see what should not be seen and his tongue avoids talking what should not be spoken. Just as the darkness recedes from the lamp the prohibited actions do not come near the organs. His intellect becomes active in all the branches of knowledge and Knowledge pervades his mind. All his desires vanish, tendency towards actions reduces and he feels disgust for sense-pleasures. If he dies while these characteristics of growing *Sattva* attribute become apparent, then it is an occasion of happiness similar to the arrival of heavenly guests after a good harvest. Arjuna, if he is as much generous and courageous as he is wealthy, then why should he not benefit in this world as well as the next? What other fate can such an incomparable person full of *Sattva* attribute have? By abandoning the body which is the means of enjoying worldly pleasures and being full of *Sattva* attribute, he becomes the very image of *Sattva* and what more, he is reborn among the men of Knowledge. When the *Sattva* attribute gets thus purified, knowledge grows and the intellect floats on it. Then. by thinking about the order in which the *Mahat* and other principles were created, he dissolves in the Self along with that thought. He attains the principle of the Self which is the thirty-seventh principle beyond the thirty-six principles proposed by the Vedantis (Chapter 13) or the twenty-fifth principle beyond the twenty-four principles of the Sankhya philosophy. He takes rebirth in the highest class of family of those who brush aside the trio of three attributes, three stages of life (Childhood, youth and old age) three types of body (the material, causal and subtle) and easily attain the fourth, that is, the Self. (14:203-225).

Predominance of Raja Similarly when the *Raja* attribute grows suppressing the *Sattva* and *Tama* plays havoc in the body then the apparent signs are as follows. The organs play around freely among the sense-pleasures. They do not remember that looking at other peoples wives is against the code hence his organs graze around everywhere like a goat. His greed grows freely to such an extent that only those things which escape his attention survive. He does not hesitate to do any kind of work. He goes after hobbies like building a temple or performing an *Ashwamedh* (Horse sacrifice) yajna. He takes up unusual tasks like establishing towns, building lakes or develop large forests. In spite of all this his desires related to gains in this world and the next remain unfulfilled. His desires grow tremendously. His hopes and ambitions gallop forward and he is not satisfied with roaming over the whole world. Such signs are seen when the Raja attribute grows in a person. If he dies under these conditions then he is reborn as a human being in another body having the same characteristics. (14:226-238). He joins the rank of persons who do not have any rest during the day or night from the worldly business. He who dies drowning in the pond of *Raja* attribute is reborn in the family of ritualistic persons. (14:241-242).

Predominance of Tama Now listen carefully to the external signs when the *Tama* attribute grows after defeating the *Sattva* and *Raja* attributes. His mind is like the sky on the new moon night without the sun or the moon. Full of darkness of ignorance he does not even talk about thought. The subtleness of his intellect dips to such an extent that it will surpass even a stone in the hardness. His memory appears lost and his body appears to be filled inside out with thoughtless

arrogance and his transactions are of foolish nature. Improper behaviour is in his bones. His evil actions cease only after his death. He likes doing bad deeds. He is very fond of doing prohibited deeds and his natural tendency is also similar. He becomes intoxicated without drinking liquor, talks as if in delirium without having fever and is deluded without love like a madman. He is in ecstasy but that is not the same as the samadhi of meditation because he is possessed by infatuation. These signs are apparent when the *Tama* attribute grows with all the accompanying assistance and if he dies in that state then he is reborn in the *Tama* attribute. The rebirth that one gets after death with the *Tama* wrapped up in the desires is as an animal or a bird or a tree or a worm. (14:243-259).

Fruits of Sattva attribute Therefore what one gets from the *Sattva* attribute is the fruits of righteous deeds as told in the Vedas. Therefore the *Sattva* attribute leads to the incomparable fruits of natural happiness and Knowledge which are called Sattvic fruits. The actions caused by *Raja* attribute are outwardly sweet but bitter from inside like the fruits of a Vrindavan tree. Just as a poisonous root when planted gives rise to a poisonous offshoot similarly the fruits of an action due to *Tama* attribute gives rise to fruits of ignorance. (14:260-264).

Therefore Arjuna, the *Sattva* attribute is the causal agent for Knowledge. Just as forgetting the Self is the cause for the non-dual Supreme Soul to take birth as an individual, similarly the *Raja* attribute is the cause for greed. It is only the Tama attribute which is responsible for the three defects namely delusion,

ignorance and mistakes. Thus I explained to you the three attributes individually in order to clear your thoughts. Out of these the *Raja* and the *Tama* cause one's downfall while without the *Sattva* attribute one does not attain Knowledge. Therefore just as some people renounce everything to adopt the fourth type of life (i.e. that of sanyasi) a *Sadhak* (aspirant) should give up all and live throughout his life with the *Sattva* attribute. (14:265-270).

Fate after death : Those who dance with joy adopting the *Sattva* attribute and finally die, live in heaven. Similarly, those who live with the *Raja* attribute and die are reborn on earth as human beings. They have to undergo a mixture of pleasure and pains but cannot avoid death. Similarly those who live with the *Tama* attribute are allotted hell after death. Thus I have explained to you the three attributes which develop by the power of the Brahman and their workings. Here the Soul follows the workings of the attributes due to their influence, without changes in its own form. (14:271-276). Heaven, earth and hell are variations of the natures of the attributes. If we try to see beyond the workings of the attributes then what we see is the form of the Self. Keep in mind that there is nothing other that the Self. (14:278). By the strength of the Soul these three attributes appear in the form of the body just as we see the earth and water appear as a tree. (14:280-281). These three attributes become the body inclusive of the mind, therefore they become the cause of the binding. Arjuna, it is a miracle that such a complex intertwining of the attributes and the body does not hinder the path of liberation. These three attribute do make the body move progress or regress according to their nature but that does not hinder anybody from

going beyond them. I shall now tell you how one can achieve the liberation. (14:283-286).

Effect of Self-realisation I have already told you (Chapter 13 SL24) that Consciousness though within the attributes does not become like them. Now I am telling you the same once more. This is realised once the individual gets the Self-realisation due to Knowledge. (14:287-288). The individual does not consider anymore that he is full of the attributes and only watches them. (14:290). Thus the individual who is full of the attributes but is also beyond them realises that "I am Brahman" and with this attitude says that I am not the doer but only a witness to the action and it is the attributes which control the actions. All actions occur through the differences in the nature of the three attributes *Sattva, Raja* and *Tama* therefore they are the afflictions of the attributes. (14:292-294). Among these three attributes I stand like the spring which is the cause for the splendour of the woods. (14:295). Even though actions take place by my power I remain the non-doer in the body. The attributes are apparent when I show them and I nurture their characteristics and what remains when they are destroyed is also me. In this way he in whom knowledge has arisen is obviously beyond the attributes. (14:297-299).

Now, he accurately knows the principle which is without the attribute because the stamp of knowledge has been imprinted on his mind. Just as a river ultimately meets the sea he also meets only my regime. That person who is beyond attributes knows that I am the Brahman. (14:300-301). He who was asleep and snoring in the slumber of ignorance wakes up to find himself in the form of the Self. Because the mirror of

confusion fell down and broke, he cannot see his image in it once the wind of I-am-the-body ego subsides then the individual and the Soul become one like the waves and the sea and when that happens that person who is beyond attributes becomes one with me. And once he becomes one with me then even if he remains in the body he does not get in the clutches of the attributes. (14:303-307). Attributes may come and go his Knowledge does not get unclean and though he may be in the body he remains unattached. The three attributes play by their strength in his body but he does not let his ego to look at them. He is so steady inside that he is not aware of the affairs of the body. (14:309-311). Just as the departed fragrance of a lotus does not return to it but merges in the sky similarly once he attains unity with the Self he is not aware of the body and its affairs. Therefore the six qualities like birth, old age, death etc. which are associated with the body are absent in a man of knowledge. (14:313-315). Once the awareness vanishes one recognises the original Self and then he no longer remains aware of anything else but the Self. Therefore I call a person who has realised the Self as a person beyond the attributes even though he may be in the body. (14:317-318).

Arjuna asked, "Please explain how he goes beyond the attributes and how he behaves." (14:321-322).

GOING BEYOND ATTRIBUTES

Shri Krishna replied, "When he is drawn into performing actions due to strengthening of the *Raja* attribute, he does not get afflicted by the egoistic thought that it is he who is doing the actions nor does he feel sorry if he is not able to perform them. When

the Sattva attribute increases and the light of the knowledge pervades all organs, he does not get elated by the joy of his learning. He is not engulfed in delusion if the Tama attribute increases, nor is he ashamed of ignorance. When he is under the spell of delusion he does not aspire for Knowledge. Similarly he does not avoid actions when he achieves Knowledge and is not sorry for it. He does not pay attention to the attributes. Does such a person of Knowledge need any other knowledge? Will he feel proud by the thought that he is the doer? Will he miss Knowledge when he is under delusion? (14:327-335).

Thus, since he himself is the attributes as well as their tasks, he is not separated from them. He remains in the body like a traveller occupying a rest house temporarily. And similarly he does not do actions or get them done through others by coming under the influence of the attributes. He neither conquers the attributes nor does he get conquered by them. (14:336-338). He is not disturbed by the comings and goings of the attributes. (14:340). A person of knowledge does not get bound by the attributes. Without being influenced by them he watches their play from a distance. When the Sattva tendency bends one towards righteous deeds, the Raja tendency to enjoyment of pleasures and the *Tama* tendency towards delusion he considers that all these actions are taking place by the power of the attributes. (14:342-345). He is not disturbed by the stir made by the attributes. A person beyond the attributes may thus be recognised by these qualities. Now listen to the behaviour of such a person. (14:347-348).

Once he attains my form he sees only my form in all the living and non-living things therefore whether happiness or sorrow falls to his lot his mind is balanced like a pair of scales. Now he has left the I-am-the-body attitude and has attained the Self. The seed which was planted has resulted into the harvest of grains. Once he has merged into the Self he is not affected by pleasure or pain even though he remains in the body. Just as day and night are the same to a pole and do not make any difference so are the pleasure and pain to a soul in the body. Whether the heavens come to him or a tiger rushes to him his attitude of the Self does not get disturbed. Nothing disturbs his equanimity. He does not get angered by slander nor pleased by praise. (14:349- 361).

Whether one considers him to be a god and worshipped or a thief and beaten, it is all the same to him. (14:362). There is no feeling of inequality in his mind. Another quality he possesses and that is he does not do any kind of transactions. He does not commence any work. His tendency to action gets interrupted. The fruits of his action burn away in the fire of his Knowledge. He does not at all think about the enjoyments and sufferings in this world or the next. He enjoys whatever falls to his lot. He is not elated by pleasures nor gets discouraged by sorrows. Similarly he neither accepts nor forgoes anything in his mind. He whose behaviour is thus should be considered as a person beyond the attributes. Now I shall tell you the methods by which one can be beyond the attributes. (14:364-370).

I AM NOT SEPARATE FROM UNIVERSE

He who is devoted to me with unwavering mind can get rid of these attributes. Therefore I must explain to you as to who I am, how to be devoted to me and what are the signs of dedication. (14:371-372). Just as fluidity and water or space and sky are the same similarly the thing that is called universe is all me. (14:374,377). It is not true that I can be attained only after the universe is dissolved but I must be realised along with the universe. Realising me with this attitude of oneness is actually the unadulterated devotion. If one imagines a difference between me and the universe then it is adulterated devotion. (14:380-382). Therefore one should not have any thought of any such difference. (14:383). The dust particles on the earth or the snow particles in the Himalayas are not different similarly I am in me (i.e. the universe). (14:385). When the outlook of equality that one is not different from God is developed I call it devotion. This outlook is the best knowledge and the essence of yoga. (14:387-388). Because of it the attitude that "I am Brahman" comes to the surface. With this attitude that knowledge also dissolves. (14:391-392). When the difference vanishes the knowledge also vanishes. (14:394). The illusion that the devotee is on this shore and I am across disappears and what remains is only the oneness between the two. Then the question of conquering the attributes does not remain because with the entwinement of oneness they also disappear. Arjuna, this state is called the state of oneness with Brahman. He who is devoted to me is the one to attain it. Brahman weds him who carries devotion to me in this manner. (14:395-398). He who serves me with the outlook of knowledge is the crown jewel of the oneness with Brahman. Attaining this state of oneness is called the liberation while in body or the fourth achievement.

Devotion to me is the ladder for reaching the oneness with Brahman. But if you are thinking that the means of attaining me is different from me, do not do so.. (14:400-403). Brahman is only my name and I am mentioned by that name. There is no difference between me and the Brahman. That Brahman is the incomparable entity which is constant, steady, open, having the form of the code of living and which gives infinite bliss. I am the ultimate form and the place where Knowledge dissolves after its task is over. (14:404-407).

CHAPTER 15

THE SUPREME PERSON

COMMENTS BY DNYANESHWAR MAHARAJ

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says, "There is no doubt that Knowledge leads to liberation. But in order that the knowledge steadies itself in a person the mind must be very pure and knowledge cannot be steady without detachment. This principle has been very thoughtfully stated by Shri Krishna. He has also discussed how the mind can get completely detached. Just as a person taking his meal runs away leaving the dish when he knows that it contains poison, similarly once the idea of the impermanence of this world gets stamped on the

mind one runs away from attachment. The detachment thus gained does not leave you even if you try to get rid of it. In this fifteenth chapter Shri Krishna is explaining how the world is impermanent using the simile of a tree." (15:35-40).

THE TREE IS IMPEDIMENT TO LIBERATION

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, The illusion of the universe which comes in the way of the path towards Self-realisation is not the expanse of the universe but the giant tree of the worldly set-up. But it is not like the other trees that have roots below and branches above and therefore its expanse cannot be measured by anybody. Even if one sets fire to its roots or axes them instead of getting destroyed it proliferates. When cut at the roots other trees fall down along with their branches but that is not the case with this tree which not an ordinary tree. (15:46-50).

UNIVERSE COMPARED WITH THE TREE

Arjuna, it is an unusual thing that this tree is out of this world and it grows from below. (15:51). This tree in the form of the world is strange. Whichever objects occur in this world are all occupied by it. (15:53). It does not have fruits to be tasted nor flowers to be smelt. What occurs is only the tree itself. Though it is upside down it has not been uprooted therefore it is always green. Even though one may say that it has roots above, it has countless roots below too. This tree has proliferated on all sides and its tuft roots also have grown branches like banyan or Pipul tree. It is not that this world-tree has branches only below. Bunches of innumerable branches have spread out on the upper side also. Looking at it gives the impression that the sky

itself has sprouted with green leaves or as if the wind itself has taken the shape of the tree or as if the three states of creation, sustenance and destruction have assumed this form. Thus, the dense tree with roots above is born in the shape of this universe. (15:55-62).

MORE EXPLANATION ABOUT THE TREE

Now I shall explain to you, in a way that you will clearly understand, who is above this tree, who is at its root, what its characteristics are, why it spreads downwards, which are its branches or which are the branches which have grown the upward branches and how they are created and how it received the name Ashwattha and what the Self-realised persons concluded from it. (15:63-65).

Brahman becomes the universe when tainted by attributes Arjuna, this tree has his roots above because of the Brahman above it. Otherwise this Brahman does not have middle, above or below and it is one and unique. (15:72-73). That which sees here, there, front, back and everywhere without sight but is itself invisible becomes the universe with name and shape when it comes in contact with qualifications and attributes. It is pure Knowledge free of either the knower or the object to be known and is pure bliss pervading the space. It is neither the cause nor its effect (i.e. action). There is neither a sense of duality nor sense of uniqueness in it but something that can be understood by an individual through Self-realisation. In this way this pure Brahman is the upward root of the world-tree. And the shoots of the root are as follows. (15:75-78).

PROPERTIES OF MAYA

The entity which is known as *Maya* does not exist. Actually it is like the child born to a barren woman and is named *Maya*. It cannot be said that Maya is real nor can it be said that it is unreal. It cannot survive in the presence of knowledge and yet it is called beginningless. It is the holder of many principles and just as clouds are formed in the sky the universe is formed in her. All sorts of forms and shapes are folded into the folds of her fabric. She is the root of the world-tree, source of the worldly affairs illuminated by the dim light of improper unrighteous knowledge. Such an entity as *Maya* is takes shelter in the Brahman and appears through its power. (15:79-84). The *Maya* which is created from Brahman makes it forget its own nature. This is the first root of the world-tree. Non-realisation of the Self as Brahman is the main root-bulb of the tree at its top. It is called "Beejabhaava" or "the root principle" in the form of *Maya* by Vedantis. The sleep state of deep ignorance is called its "Bijankurabhaava" or "seed-sprout principle" while the dream and wakeful states are its "Phalabhaava" or "fruit principle". This is how Vedantis thus express these aspects of Maya but in all this understand that the basic root is the ignorance. (15:87-90).

EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

Roots sprout upwards and downwards from the pure soul which is at the top and they become strong in the base-soil of Maya. Then shoots sprout in all directions from the centre of that root. Thus the world tree gets its strength from the Brahman. Then it develops bunches of shoots from below. Among those, the first to sprout is the delicate green leaf of *Mahat* principle in the form of consciousness (*Chit*). Next sprouts the three-leaf

shoot of the ego with the three attributes *Sattva, Raja* and *Tama* on the lower side. Later it sprouts another shoot, that of intellect which fosters the growth of the feeling of differentiation which in turn gives rise to the twig that is the mind and keeps it fresh. Thus the root gaining strength from the sap of ignorance sprouts four types of young twigs namely mind, intellect, ego and consciousness. (15:91-97).

From these the branches of the five principles: sky, air, fire, water and earth rise straight. From these branches the tender soft leaves of the five sense organs and their sense objects grow. Out of these when the shoot of the sound grows, the hearing organ grows twice as much and gives rise to the branches of desires. Then the creeper of the body and the leaves of skin gives rise to the sprout of touch leading to an abundance of novel passions. Then the leaves of form grow and the eyes rush to that branch leading to growing delusion. Then the leaves of taste grow and the tongue develops endless cravings. Similarly the leaves of smell give rise to increasing desire by the nose which leads to greed. In this way the *Mahat* principle, ego, mind and the five principles (elements) cause the world to grow. It grows only by means of these eight parts (namely Mahat principle, ego, mind and the five principles). The world-tree grows more and more branches and just as a conch-shell appears like silver due to illusion the Brahman, by showing itself in the form of the world-tree, becomes the root of ignorance. (15:98-107).

WHY THE TREE IS CALLED ASHWATTHA

I shall also tell you why knowledgeable people call this tree as **Ashwattha**. "*Shwa*" means morning or

tomorrow. This world-tree does not remain like this even up to tomorrow. (15:110-111). It gets destroyed every moment therefore it is called **Ashwatha**. Shri Krishna does not imply this **Ashwatha** to be the ordinary *Peepul* (Ficus Religiosa) tree. (15:114-115). This tree is well-known to be indestructible but its hidden meaning is that just as ocean is depleted by the clouds on one hand and filled by the rivers on the other therefore it neither gets depleted nor does it grow. As long as the action of the clouds and the rivers does not cease it is always filled. Similarly the destruction and reformation of this tree occurs so fast that it cannot be guessed. Therefore people call it indestructible. (15:118-122). Over the passage of time the branch which represents the animal kingdom dries and falls down but it grows millions of shoots but one cannot understand when the first branch fell down and when the millions of other branches sprouted. At the time of the deluge the branches of this world tree fall down and at the time of creation they sprout into a veritable forest. The stormy winds at the time of deluge cause the barks of the tree drop and in the beginning of the new era they grow again. Then one Manu period follows the another, then dynasties like the Sun dynasty, Moon dynasty follow and expansion occurs. At the end of the Kali-Yuga the barks of the trees in all the four yugas are shed and the tree dries but when the Krita-Yuga starts again the barks grow many times faster. One cannot understand how many branches grow and how many fall. (15:125-129).

APPARENT INDESTRUCTIBLE NATURE OF THE TREE

No sooner does a twig of a body fall hundreds of others sprout because which this world-tree appears to be indestructible. With whatever speed river water may flow, the water behind meets it with the same speed. In the same way this world appears perpetual even though it is destructible. People foolishly consider this world tree to be indestructible because it grows even as it breaks. But knowing its speed, he who realises that this world-tree is momentary and is created millions of times during the batting of an eyelid and knows fully well that there is no cause for all this other than ignorance and its existence is unreal, is the person who knows everything. He is the one who knows the principles of Vedanta and whom I adore. He alone gets fruits of yoga. Who can describe the person who realises this world tree to be impermanent? (15:132-143).

Then, branches grow on the lower side of the world-tree which after reaching the ground grow upward branches too. In turn they also grow roots. Creepers growing from them sprout new leaves. The root of this tree is ignorance and with the help of the eight constituents of *Prakriti* viz., *Mahat* etc. a forest of Vedas are created. (15:144-147)

FOUR KINDS OF LIFE

Then four large branch-shoots of four types of life namely oviparous, those born from sweat, through seeds and through uterus. From each branch are created 8.4 million branches of species of life. The criss-cross branches growing from these straight branches are different species. Individuals are divided into male, female and neuter which clash with one another due to

the pressure of passions. Like clouds form one after another during the rainy season similarly different types of creatures are born through the cause of ignorance. The branches bend under their own weight and get entangled in one another and then the attrib-utes create a storm and with its force the world tree with upward roots gets split in three places. (15:148-154).

INFLUENCE OF THE THREE ATTRIBUTES

Effect of Raja attribute When the winds of the *Raja* attribute are strong the branch of human race grows rapidly. Instead of the upper side or lower side on this branch shoots grow abundantly in the middle part that is on the mortal earth plane and these shoots are those of the four castes. These branches grow constantly leaves of codes for deciding proper and improper actions according to the Vedas. Of the four dutiful actions the two namely, earning and sex, spread and shoots of passing pleasures sprout. Countless shoots of good and bad actions grow with the intention of increas-ing the action tendency. Similarly, by the time the past Karmas are annulled by suffering or pleasure and the dry branches of the bodies of past life drop off, branches of new bodies are sprouted in another place. And then new foliage of words and similar sub-jects, which decorate by their natural hues, grows constantly. Thus, when the winds of the *Raja* attribute blow, bunches of the branches of human beings proliferate and the human race gets established on the earth. (15:155-162).

Effects of Tama attribute Similarly when the winds of the *Raja* attribute subside the strong winds of the *Tama* attribute start blow-ing. Then the same branches of

human beings grow foliage of low passions and twigs of evil deeds sprout below. Then twigs of wicked tendencies grow and from them emerge transgressions. Young leaves of the prescribed rules and injunctions laid down by the three Vedas - Rigveda, Yajurveda and Samaveda grow at the end of these branches. Leaves of *Agama*s in which mantras and tech-niques of black magic for giving trouble to others are given emerge and the creeper of passions spreads. Later, as and when the roots of evil actions grow big the many branches of rebirth sprout. Then the large branch of Chandalas and other very low caste persons emerges from the tree and evil doers who have been attracted by evil deeds have to be reborn in those castes. Many horizontal branches of animals, birds, pigs, tigers, scorpions, snakes shoot out. Thus new branches continue growing and remain fresh on the tree and they give fruits of suffering in hell. The branches of the violence and wickedness grow for many lifetimes. In this way shoots of trees, grass, iron, soil and stones are formed and they also give similar fruits. Arjuna thus the branches consisting of human beings to non-living things are on the lower part of the tree. Therefore the branch of human beings may be considered as the root of other living being and non-living things and the world tree grows from it. Arjuna, if one looks for the roots of the upward branches it will be found that this very same branch occurs midway between the upward and downward going branch-es. The branches of evil actions and good actions corresponding to the *Tama* attribute and Sattva attribute respectively go from this middle branch downwards and upwards respectively. (15:163-177).

The code of Vedas applicable only to human beings

The code of the Vedas are not applicable to anybody

else other than human beings therefore though the branches corresponding to human beings have grown from upper side roots the accumulation of actions grows from this branch. Other trees also behave similarly that is when branches grow the roots go deeper and when roots go deeper the branches grow more. Body also behaves similarly, i.e. as long as there is the accumulation of karmas (actions) one is compelled to acquire the body in this world and as long as one is in the body actions cannot be avoided. Therefore human body is the root of the branches of actions and there is no getting away from it. (15:178-182).

Effect of Sattva attribute After the storm of the Tama attribute subsides the storm of Sattva attribute starts with great force. When this happens the same branches of human beings sprout good desires from which shoots of knowledge grow. After these shoots of knowledge develop shoots of sharp intellect grow from them, which expand within moments. After the shoots of intellect expand they gain the strength from inspiration and the intellect gains dis-crimination. From there beautiful foliage of devotion filled with the essence of intellect grows and from it straight shoots of good tendency come out. From there many shoots of good actions come out leading to loud singing of Vedas. Then leaves of proper social behaviour, behaviour as prescribed in the Vedas and different types of Yajna rituals grow one after another. Thus, branches of austerity with bunches of regular self-controlled behaviour and young twigs of detachment grow. Shoots of some specific austeri-ties (vratas) arise from the sharp sprouts of courage and go up rapidly. As long as the storm of Sattva attribute blows the twigs of

knowledge grow with force from the thick foliage of Vedas. And then a straight twig of wealth arises and grows and gives rise to a cross branch of fruits like heaven etc. The second red branch of detachment also grows which grows by getting continuously new foliage of liberation. (15:183-194).

Next come the cross branches of the planets Sun, moon etc., the manes, rishis, Vidyadhars etc. Branches come out even higher than these and they get fruits like Indralok. To these branches sprout other high level branches of rishis like Marichi, Kashyap etc. who excel in austerity and knowledge. Thus the rows of branches grew and expanded more and more on the upper side and therefore though the tree is small at the base it has become big due to being full of fruits. The branches, which come even above these, get shoots like Brahmalok and Kailas and due to weight of the fruits the upper branches get bent down up to the root. In other trees also when branches become heavy with fruits they bend towards the root. Similarly due to attainment of deep knowledge the branches of this world tree bend towards the root i.e. the Brahman from which the tree sprouted in the first place. Therefore Arjuna, an individual cannot go above the level of Brahmalok or Kailas. If he goes above that he himself becomes Brahman. But the branches of Brahmalok etc. are nowhere in comparison with the root Brahman. The branches of renunciates like Sanak, Sanandan (The mind-children of Brahmadeo) etc. do not get fruits or roots and they are like Brahman itself. Thus the branches of Brahmalok etc. which are above those of human beings have gone very high up. They have grown out of the branches of human beings therefore the latter which are at the lower side are their roots.

Thus I have described to you this unworldly world-tree which has the roots on the upper side and branches on both the upper and lower sides. I also discussed in detail the roots on the lower side of this tree. Now listen to how this tree can be uprooted. (15:195-209).

HOW TO UPROOT THE TREE

Arjuna, you may get a doubt as to what can uproot this giant tree. Because it is such a vast and strong tree, the uppermost branches of which have reached the Brahmalok, its root in the formless Brahman, its downward branches spread in non-leaving undergrowth and the mortal world spread in its middle part. If you are going to bring ordinary thoughts like who will be able to destroy the tree then look here, what is the difficulty in uproot-ing this tree? (15:210-214).

Arjuna, this world-tree is not real. What courage is required to uproot it? The description I made of this tree about its roots and branches is meaningless like describing the many children of a barren woman. (15:216-217). If the tree were really having strong roots and spread like I described then who on earth would have been capable of uprooting it? Arjuna the description of the world I made metaphorically by comparing it to the tree is all Maya. (15:219-220). Where ignorance itself is an illusion then how can the actions arising from it be otherwise? Therefore really speaking this world-tree is unreal. (15:223).

When it is said that it has no end, it is true in a way. (15:224). Arjuna, so long as discrimination is not generated in person there is no end to this tree. (15:226). Ignorance which is the root of this tree does not vanish unless knowledge arises. Similarly the talk

that this tree is beginningless is not a rumour but is appropriate to its characteristics. Because if the tree is not real how can it have a beginning? Who is the mother of a person who is not even born? (15:229-233). Therefore it has been called beginningless because it has no existence. Arjuna, this tree has neither beginning nor end and its intermediate state is also unreal. (15:236-237). But what a wonder! This tree is unreal but at the same time real also. This world-tree appears beautiful to an ignorant person. It creates an illusion which deludes an ignorant person. (15:239-241). But this illusion of the universe is momentary and hollow. It appears real but when one tries to grasp it slips away. (15:243-244). Therefore what efforts are required to uproot a tree which has no beginning, nor end nor existence nor a form? Arjuna, has not the tree proliferated because of the ignorance about ourselves? It has to be felled by the axe of Self-realisation. But other than that of knowledge whatever other methods you may use will get you more and more entangled in this tree. And how many branches will you climb up and get down from? Therefore you destroy ignorance, the root of this tree by appropriate knowledge. (15:247-250).

Persons engrossed in methods miss liberation Arjuna, a person who is worried about the methods to be used for destroying the unreal world misses Self-realisation and therefore the impression he has gained of the world being real actually strengthens. Only the sword of knowledge can destroy the world created from ignorance but to use that sword of knowledge with ease the intellect needs constant support of detachment. Once the detachment becomes firm then only the binding to the religious code, to the need for earning

livelihood and passions vanish. Arjuna, the detachment becomes strong only when one gets disgusted with every worldly object. One should then take the sword from the sheath of ego in the hands of inward looking intellect and sharpen it on the stone of discrimination until it attains the sharpness of "I am the Brahman" and then clean it with knowledge of the Self. Then holding it in the grip of determination, one should try it once or twice and balance it with mind. Then once the sword becomes one with oneself by continued contemplation nothing can stand before it. That sword of Self-realisation shining with the brightness of non-duality will not let any part of the world-tree to survive. Just as all darkness vanishes as soon as sun rises similarly the sharp edge of the sword of knowledge does its task and the upper and lower roots of the world tree or the expanse of the branches grown on the lower side vanishes. Thus Arjuna, you cut the tree with upward root by the sword of Self-realisation. (15:253-266).

Once this is done then one should observe the Self which is something that cannot be pointed at as "it is this" and by attaining which the ego goes away. But do not do like fools who look in the mirror and think they have two faces. (15:267-268). The proper way of observing the Self is similar to the fire which merges into its original latent form when fuel is over or like tasting its own taste or eye seeing its own pupil that is one should observe it with the feeling of non-duality. (15:271- 272,274).

Realisation of the Self The primeval place which is seen without seeing and known without knowing is called the Primeval Man (Adya Purusha). But even he is described by Shrutis by taking help of attributes and

make meaningless noise that it has a name and form. But people who are disgusted with heaven and worldly life swear that they will not be reborn and turn to yoga and knowledge. Then they become detached and turn their back to world-ly life and crossing the Brahmalok which is the highest stage attainable by the path of action they march ahead. then those men of knowledge shaking of the feelings of ego etc. take the entry pass to enter the abode of the Self. The Self from which the tradition of the universe is growing, by lack of knowledge of which one feels the spread of this universe and the spirit of "I and you" duality has its play is something which must be experi-enced by oneself. There is one more sign of recognising it and that is once this Self-realisation is attained one does not return from it to be reborn. People who are full of knowledge only can reach this state. (15:275-284).

Losing Duality Delusion and pride leave such persons. They do not come in the clutches of passions. Just as a banana tree falls after bearing fruit their actions gradually cease because of Self- realisation. All doubts leave them. They are not capable of seeing duality between themselves and others. The consciousness and pride about their body vanishes along with ignorance. The sense of duality that can cause delusion leaves them and they lack in it. They do not face the duel between pain and pleasure experienced by a body. The duel between pain and pleasure, which causes sinful and meritorious actions, does not affect them. These thoughtful persons are the swans who separate the water of material objects from the milk of the Self and drink the latter. (15:285-296). Because of ignorance they were seeing the Brahman in its manifested form in things scattered here and there but once they attained

the sight of knowledge they could see the Brahman as one continuous entity in all objects. Their thoughts merge steadily in Brahman. Because they see Brahman in everything desires do not touch them. No emotions enter their mind nor is it agitated by feelings of lust. They are not troubled by hope. They do not like even to be mentioned before them the topic of sense pleasures. In this way those who have burnt in the fire of knowledge all sense pleasures go and get merged "there". If you ask where this "there" is then it is the place which never gets destroyed and which is not something that can be seen if you try to see it or know if you want to know it or can be described as similar to some object. (15:297-307).

That place cannot be seen even when everything is visible in the light of a lamp, the moon or the sun. The world is apparent only when the Self is hidden. (15:308-309). It is only when light from the entity of Self is shaded that the Sun, moon etc. shine by their intense brightness. That entity is extremely bright and all encompassing and illuminates even the sun and the moon. The light of the sun and the moon originates from this light therefore giving brightness to all shining objects is the basic aspect of this entity of Self. (15:311-313).

The radiance of the Brahman Just as when the sun rises the moon and the stars disappear similarly in the light of this entity all universe along with sun and moon vanishes. (15:314). The entity in which no material object is appears is my highest abode. Those who reach there do not come back. (15:316-317). Those who become one with me by means of pure knowledge are not reborn. (15:320).

Hearing this, Arjuna expressed a doubt. He said, "Your statements are contradictory. If an individual is different from you then he will not become one with you and if he is one with you then the question of his returning does not arise." (15:321-328).

Some devotees do not prefer liberation Shri Krishna said, "There are both types of persons who do not return after reaching unity with me, those who are separate from me and those who are one with me. If you think deeply then they are one with me but if you think superficially they appear separate from me. (15:330-331). If one sees with the eyes of Knowledge they are one with me but they appear separate due to ignorance. If you really consider Self then how can there be two types of behaviours of being one with and being different from me? (15:334-335).
Even if I am pure the influence of Maya creates ignorance. It then gets a doubt, "Who am I?" and itself gives the answer "I am the body". When Knowledge of the self gets bounded by the body, it is seen as part of me because of its smallness. Just as waves on the sea appear to be part of the ocean to a person of limited understanding, I the giver of vitality to the material body and creator of the I-am-the-body ego become apparent in the form of an individual. (15:341-345).

The activity that is seen by the intellect of the individual is called the living world. Where birth and death are considered as real I call that place as living world or world. The moon is different from water but we can see its reflection in water. The way I exist in this living world is similar. (15:346-348). The status of my being beginningless and a non-doer does not get

disturbed but the appearance that I am the doer and the experiencer is an illusion. (15:350).

Prakriti This pure soul by mixing with Prakriti appropriates its properties to himself and then assuming that Prakriti, mind and the five sense organs are his gets engrossed in worldly activities. (15:351-352). Forgetting himself he considers himself to be similar to Prakriti and gets involved with it. Then he rides on the chariot of the mind, gets out through the ears and enters the woods of the words. He enters the deep forest of touch holding the apron strings of Prakriti. Sometimes he gets out through the eyes and roams freely on the hill of form. He goes out through the tongue and enters the valley of the taste. This individual who is my fraction gets out of the nose and enters the thick forest of odours and wanders there. Thus with the help of mind, the master of the body and the organs this individual experiences the sense objects like sound etc. (15:354-360).

When that individual enters a body he gives the impression that he is the doer and experiencer. (15:361). His ego increases and the sense-objects and sense organs play havoc. (15:363). When he abandons the body he takes with him the five sense organs and the mind. (15:367). When the individual attains a body in this world or in the heaven he takes him the mind and the group of sense-organs. To an ignorant person the behaviour of an individual appears like a lamp which disappears along with its brightness when extinguished and reappears along with the brightness when lighted again. People think that it is the soul which entered the body and it is he who experienced the sense-objects and it also he who went along with the body. However,

taking birth and dying or doing and experiencing are the properties of Prakriti. But it is considered that they belong to the soul. (15:368-370).

When the little body starts making movements due to vital force people say the individual is born. Similarly by association with the individual the organs experience their respective sense objects then that is called "experiencing". Then when the body becomes weak due to experiences and gets destroyed people cry that the individual has gone. Are we to suppose that only where there is a tree which makes movements wind is blowing and where there is no tree there is no wind? (15:373-376). In the same way people blinded by delusion determine that the birth and death of a body are actually those of the soul. It is a different class of people who know that the soul is in his own place in the body and he merely witnesses its activities. Those who through the eyes of knowledge consider the body to be merely a cover for the soul and do not get involved in its affairs and those whose sense of discrimination has grown and have been inspired towards realisation of the soul are the ones who know the soul. (15:380- 383). When we see the reflection of the star studded sky in water we know that it has not fallen down in it but has remained where it was and what we see in water is merely an illusion. Similarly the individual though covered in the body is actually the soul. (15:384-385). Body may come and go I remain unaffected and persons of knowledge know me as I always am. They know that the soul continues to be uninterrupted while bodies are imagined in ignorance as being created and destroyed. They understand me with proper knowledge of the Self that soul does not grow or diminish, he does not do actions nor cause them to be done. (15:389-390).

Knowledge must be accompanied by detachment A person may attains this knowledge, his intellect may become so subtle as to penetrate even an atom and he may become learned in all branches of knowl-edge, but unless this learning is accompanied by detachment, he will not encounter me though I am all-pervasive. He may talk mouthfuls about discrimination but if he harbours sense-objects in his mind then definitely he will not find me. (15:391-393) Even if all branches of knowledge are on the tip of his tongue as long as ego exists in the mind he will not attain me even after millions of births. Now I shall explain to you how I encompass all beings. (15:396-397).

I support the Universe The radiance with the help of which the affairs of this world are seen, including the radiance of the sun is mine. Understand that this radiance is in the beginning as well as at the time of the end of the world. The moonlight which gives moisture to the world after the sun has made it dry is also mine. And the strong radiance which does the functions of burning and cooking also belongs to me. (15:398-400).

The earth does not get dissolved in the limitless ocean because I enter the earth and give it support. And the countless creatures which this earth supports does so because I support them by entering it. Arjuna, I have become a moving lake of nectar in the sky in the form of the moon. I nurture all the plant kingdom by forming canals of nectar of the rays which originate there and spread below. Thus I give life to all creatures in the form of food by means of growing and nurturing grains etc. And even if the food is grown how do the individual creatures digest it and feel satisfied? (15:401-406).

For this I set the fires burning at the navel in the stomach and that fire is myself. And by working the blowers of the Prana and Apana airs day in and day out I consume food in quantities which just cannot be measured. It is I who digests the four types of food : dry, fatty, cooked and raw. Thus I am all creatures, I am their life that is the food and I am the digestive fir which burns and digests this food which sustains life. What more can I tell you about my all-encompassing nature? There is nothing in this world other than me. I pervade everywhere. But then you will ask me why one sees some creatures happy and others unhappy? (15:407-412). If you are harbouring doubts like this than I shall completely remove your doubts. (15:414).

Now look, it is I alone who pervades everything and everywhere. Nothing is different from me. But I appear to individual creatures according to individual intellect. Sound is the property of space but different musical instruments give different sounds, in the same way my appearance results differently in different creatures. (15:415-416). If an ignorant person and a wise person both see a sapphire string then the ignorant person may think it is a snake but the wise person will know it as a sapphire string. (15:419). Similarly persons of knowledge gain happiness from me but the ignorant ones feel unhappy. (15:420).

Actually the ego in the hearts of all creatures that "I am so and so." is also me. But by keeping company of saints, by practice of yoga and knowledge, serving one's Guru with detachment and by good behaviour this ignorance disappears and the ego dissolves into the Self and when this happens the individual knows me and

with the realisation of the Self he becomes happy. (15:421-424).

On the other hand, those whose ego is involved only with the body by serving it and by bragging about the worldly affairs follow the path of desirous action keeping in mind goal of worldly pleasures and attainment of heaven after death. Because of this choicest parts of sorrow come to their lot. Just as what we see while awake becomes the base for what we see in dreams similarly I am the base for the illusion due to their ignorance. (15:425-428). It is an established fact that I am alone the root of the knowl-edge and as well as of the ignorance. Therefore Arjuna, because they did not understand my form Vedas attempted to understand me without they split into three branches. But even though the branches are different they all lead to the understanding of my form. Even Shrutis (Upanishads) stumble when they reach the great Principle (Aham Brahmasmi or I am the Brahman) and where the Shrutis are not able to express my form it is I who reveals it. And the pure knowledge of the Self where everything including the Shrutis dissolves, I am alone the knower of that. (15:431-436). I know my unique form free of the worldly affairs and I am the cause of its realisation. (15:438). When the Knowledge which swallows the ignorance itself dissolves it is not possible to state that it exists or it does not. (15:440). Thus, while ex-plaining to Arjuna how he pervades both the living and non-living universe Shri Krishna ultimately described the pure unattached form. (15:442).

On this Arjuna remarked, "What a wonder that more one knows about the Self more interesting it becomes! Oh Shri Krishna, please tell me again about the

qualification less nature which you described while telling me about your all-pervasiveness." (15:445-447)

QUALIFICATIONS

On this, Shri Krishna expressed his happiness at Arjuna's enquiry and went on to describe two types of qualifications. (15:461-462). Where words and spoken texts (Vedas) fall silent is the indescribable pure form. To tell that it cannot be described Shri Krishna is first telling about qualifications. Before telling about the qualification less form it is necessary to discuss first about qualifications itself. (15:467-469)

Shri Krishna said, "Arjuna, if we consider this world to be a town its population is very small, consisting of only two individ-uals. There a third individual also but he cannot bear to hear even the mention of the name of either of the two. But let us talk about him later. First let me tell about the two who have come to live in this town. (15:471-474)
Of these two, one is blind, foolish and crippled while the other has all his organs in good shape. Because they are living in the same town they happened to give company to each other. One of them is named Kshar and the other as Akshar. This world is com-pletely filled by the two. Now who is Kshar and who is Akshar and what are their characteristics is what I shall explain to you. (15:475-477).

Arjuna, from the *Mahat* principle to a grass blade, whatever is small or big, moving or stationary, intelligible to both mind and intellect, that which acquires form after having been produced from the five principles getting into the grip of the three attributes (*Sattva, Raja* and *Tama*), the gold from which coins

that are living beings are minted, the dice with which gambling game is played with Time, that which can be understood through improper type of knowledge, that which is created and destroyed every moment, that which enters the woods of delusion and creates the world, and why talk more, is known as the universe, has already been explained bearlier as the Field formed out of eightfold *Prakriti* and thirty six principles. But why repeat all that? I have told about it to you a short while ago through the analogy of the tree. (15:478-485).

KSHARA, AKSHARA AND SUPERIOR PERSON

Kshara Person The conscious Self, having imagined this world to be its place of residence, has become like it. Like a lion who sees its reflection in the well water and jumps into it with anger, the non-dual Self deceives itself into assuming duality. In this way the Soul imagining the world to be its residence, slumbers in it disregarding its primary form. Under the influence of the sleep he snores that "I am happy" or "I am unhappy" and talks incoherently using words like "I" and "mine". Dreaming that "This is my father", "This is my mother", "I am fair skinned or dark or per-fect", "Are not this son. this wealth, this woman mine?" the soul when he wanders in the forest that is this world and the heaven is known as Kshara person. (15:486-493).

When the Knower of the field in the state which is known as the individual, overlooks his nature of the Self and becomes like all creatures, then he is known as Kshar Person (Purusha). (15:494-495). He is completely occupies the state of the Self therefore he is called Purusha and also because he resides in the body albeit in a somnolent state he is again called Purusha

(N.B. Puri means town; body is likened to a town in which the Soul resides as stated earlier). And because he has been tainted by qualifications he has been falsely accused as being a Kshara or perishable. He becomes freed of the qualifications once they are destroyed. The qualifications make him impermanent and thus by virtue of the impermanence of the qualifications he has been called Kshara. Thus all living creatures should be called Ksharas. (15:496-501).

Akshara Person Now let me explain what *Akshara* is. Arjuna, the second aspect of the individual which is Akshara is an intermediary i.e. behaving like a disinterested witness. He does not get involved either with knowledge or with ignorance. He does not assume monistic nature by proper or true knowledge nor does he assume dualistic nature by the improper knowledge. Detached non-awareness is its natural form. When earth is mixed with water and made into a lump of mud for making a pot, it no longer remains the original earth and it has yet to take a form and become a pot. The state of the Akshara Purusha is similar to this in between state. (15:502-505). It may be compared with the sleep state which occurs between the state of wakefulness and the dreaming state. The state of ignorance, which lies between the stage when delusion of the world has vanished, but knowledge of the Self has not yet occurred is the state known as *Akshara*. (15:507-508).

Manifestable and Unmanifestable The place where the individual soul dissolves after all qualifications vanish, where qualifica-tions and the qualified individual remain in a state of dissolution is called the Unmanifestable. Complete ignorance occurs during the

state of deep sleep therefore it is called the root aspect of the Unmanifestable in Vedanta Philosophy while the dream state and the state of wakefulness are its fruit aspects. This root aspect is the place of the *Akshara* Person. From this place originates the improper knowledge which makes the states of wakefulness and dream to spread and journeys through the thought-forests of the intellect. Arjuna, the place from where the individual raises the world and where the Manifestable and the Unmanifestable meet is the state called the *Akshara* Person. (15:510-515).

The second i.e. the Kshara person experiences the states of wakefulness and dream by taking up a body. These two states arise from the sleep state well-known as the state of ignorance and is one step lower that the state of attainment of Brahman. Really speaking, if the individual had not reached the wakeful or dream states from the state of sleep then he would reach the state of the Brahman (because ignorance would have vanished on wakefulness. Instead he reaches the wakefulness and dream states which are the attributes of the impermanent body.) The entity that experiences an illusion of the Field and the Knower of the Field in the dream state, when the clouds in the form of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* cover the sky of the sleep state, is the basic form of the Akshara Pur-usha who is also the root of the inverted world tree. The reason why he is called a Purusha or individual when he is really a Soul is that he takes a slumber in the town of *Maya*. Also the state in which the comings and goings of passions, which is a type of ignorance, is not felt is verily the sleep state. Therefore this Akshara Purusha does not get destroyed by itself and nothing except knowledge can destroy it. Therefore he is well-known as Akshara in the great

principle of the Vedantic philosophy. Thus, *Akshara Purusha* is actually the Consciousness which due its being qualified by Maya assumes the form of an individual. (15:516-525)

Superior Person From the improper knowledge arise the two states of wakefulness and the dream and dissolve themselves in deep ignorance. When that ignorance disappears and you face Knowledge it destroys the ignorance and itself disappears after giving you an experience of the Brahman, similar to the fire which destroys itself after burning wood. Thus, after Knowledge has destroyed ignorance and destroyed itself, the state of experience of the Self which remains without the Knowledge itself should be consid-ered the Superior Being. This third type of person is different from the two (*Kshara* and *Akshara*) discussed earlier. Just as the state of wakefulness is different from the two other states, namely the sleep and the dream states in that the experiences differ, (15:526-530), similarly the Superior Being is different from the Kshara and Akshara. (15:531). He is different from them in the manner fire, though intrinsically existing in wood, is different from it. (15:532). No trace of the three states of dream, sleep and wakefulness remains there and because all the three states have been nullified neither monistic nor dualistic state is experienced nor is experienced being and not being. Such a state is called the Superior Being which is also called the Supreme Soul in this world. But calling him by such a name is possible by not dissolving oneself into Him and supported by the state as an individual. Arjuna, just as only a person standing on the shore can speak about drowning in the river, the Vedas are able to speak about superior and inferior only by staying on the border of

discrimination. Therefore they consider Kshara and Akshara as inferior as compared with the Superior Being and identify Him with the form of the Supreme Soul. Understand therefore that the term "Supreme Soul" thus signifies the Superior Being. (15:534-540).

Otherwise, the supreme Soul is such that He is spoken about without actually speaking, about whom knowing nothing is actually same as knowing Him, who occurs without any happening. There, the even the aspect of "I am that" vanishes, the speaker becomes the spoken and view disappears along with the viewer. (15:541-542). Can anybody say that something has survived behind? Whatever one experiences in this situation should be considered as His form. The light which occurs besides the illuminated object, the controller who is besides the controlled exists in His own form. He who is the realm of sound that gives the power to hear, the realm of the taste that gives the power to taste, the cosmic bliss that creates the bliss, the pinnacle of perfection, Supreme Person among all persons, the resting place of the repose, bliss of the bliss, brilliance of the brilliance and the place of disso-lution of the zero of the big naught, who is beyond the growth and dissolution, who is larger than the largest, bears the universe without becoming it. (15:545-550).

I AM BEYOND ALL

The universe and the Supreme Soul are not different. (15:552). He is the one responsible for the expansion and contrac-tion of the universe. He does not change if takes the form of the universe or does not go anywhere if the universe dissolves. He does not get destroyed by anything under any circumstances. He can be

compared only with Himself. I am that unique Entity who illumi-nates Himself, in whom no duality occurs, he who is beyond form and superior to Kshara and Akshara and therefore Vedas and people call me as Supreme Person. Dawn of Knowledge has arrived for him who understands me as such. After the onset of Knowledge the whole universe appears to be meaningless to him. Once he attains my knowledge he no longer gets deceived by the illusion that is this world. Knowing my real form he gives up the sense of distinc-tion and says, " I myself am a self-created true bliss existing everywhere and he knows me as not being different from himself. It is difficult to state that he has known everything because no sense of duality exists within him. Therefore Arjuna he alone is worthy of my devotion just as sky alone is fit to embrace sky. (15:554-565). Only he who becomes one with me can be devoted to me. Otherwise, how can the devotional relation develop?. (15:567-568). The relation between me and the devotion of one who is devoted to me with the sense of oneness with me can be compared only with the Sun and its aura which are not different from each other. (15:570).

IN PRAISE OF THE GITA

Thus, the fragrance of the Gita, which can obtained only through the Shastras, spread from the lotus of the Upanishads right from the beginning of this chapter. The Gita is the essence extracted from the Vedas by churning them using the intellect of the sage Vyas. It is the river of the nectar of Knowledge, the seventeenth phase of the moon of bliss or the goddess Laxmi rising from the milk ocean of contemplation. Therefore none other than me knows it from the heart by one’s own

words or letters or meaning. When Kshara and Akshara persons confronted it, it surrendered to me complete-ly. Therefore the Gita which you are now hearing is my faithful spouse. Really speaking, this Gita is not a shastra, which can be told through words. It is the science of conquering this world. The letters of this Gita are mantras which can lead you to attain-ing the Self. Arjuna, by telling you this Gita I have brought forth my secret treasure. If my conscious Self is compared to Lord Shiva then you who has managed to bring out the Ganges of the Gita from his head are like the Sage Gautama. (15:571-579). Arjuna, because the impurity of the three attributes has left you, you have become my residence along with the Gita. The Gita is my creeper of knowledge and he who understands it becomes free of all delusions. (15:582-583). But what is there to wonder if delusion vanishes when one understands the Gita perfectly? That Knowledge of the Self leads him to the form of the Self. After this Knowledge of the Self is attained Karma also dissolves realising that its life work is over. When the pinnacle of Knowledge is installed over the temple of Karma, Karma ceases automatically. Therefore a person who has attained Knowledge has no reason to perform duties. Thus said the saviour of the destitute. (15:585-588).

CHAPTER 16

DIVINE AND DEMONIACAL ENDOWMENTS

THE TWO ENDOWMENTS

A subject for which one develops a liking penetrates the mind deeper and deeper and that is called "love". It is natural that curious persons, who have not experienced this love, should feel worried about whether they would gain knowledge and having gained it how it would last. Therefore it is necessary to first ponder over the questions: "How that pure Knowledge may be attained and how it will last after it is attained?, or "Why am I not attain-ing that Knowledge? Or "Which is that powerful anti-Knowledge entity that would set one on the wrong path? Shri Krishna will now speak in this chapter in order to satisfy the wishes of the curious seekers so that they would get rid of things that are impediments in the path of knowledge and concentrate on those things which increase it. He will sing the praises of the divine endow-ment that gives rise to Knowledge and increases peace. Similarly, the terrible nature of the demoniacal endowment, which supports the evil emotions like anger and enmity due to knowledge related to sense objects, will also be described. During the discussions in the ninth chapter it was mentioned in passing that these two natures cause good and bad effects and thus the topic has already been intro-duced. This topic should have been discussed in detail there but other topics came up, therefore Shri Krishna is explaining it now. Therefore this sixteenth chapter may be considered as an extension of the earlier chapter. But enough of this introduction! The present topic concerns the fact that the power of these two endow-ments

causes a good or a bad form to be imparted to Knowledge. (16:53-64).

Now listen first to the nature of the divine endowment which guides the seekers like a flame, illuminating the path through the dark-ness of delusion. Collection of several objects, which support one another, is called wealth in this world. Divine wealth creates happiness and one gets it by gift from the divine and therefore it is called divine endowment. (16:65-67).

THE TWENTY-SIX DIVINE ENDOWMENTS

Fearlessness Shri Krishna says, "The best among the qualities of this divine endowment is fearlessness. (16:68). He who is not allowing ego to develop while he is working or at rest is not afraid of this world. When non-duality pervades the mind he realises that the whole universe is filled with Brahman and he abandons even mentioning fear. Spirit of non-duality destroys fear. These are the indications of the quality called fearlessness and it is part of the path towards true Knowledge. (16:70-73).

Purity Now the quality called purity of the mind is to be recognised by the following indications. (16:74). After one gives up the tendency towards desires and doubts and casting of the burden of *Raja* and *Tama* attributes the intellect is attracted towards con-templation about the Self. The intellect does not waver at all even when enticed by sense objects. Intellect becomes dedicated having developed a liking for the form of the Self. (16:77-78). This is what is called purity of the mind. (16:80).

Steadiness Concentrating and involving oneself completely in one of the two paths, i.e. the path of Knowledge and the path of yoga, whichever is suitable for attaining Self while abandoning other tendencies of the mind and ridding one's mind of all doubts is the third quality called steadiness in Knowledge and Yoga. (16:81-82, 84).

Charity Practising charity by helping a distressed person in every possible way and in all sincerity, even if he were an enemy, giving whatever one can and not sending him away empty handed is a quality which shows the path to real Knowledge. (16:85, 87-88).

Self-restraint Now listen to the indications of self-restraint. A yogi separates the organs from the sense objects. Also he does not permit the breath of sense objects from the sense organs to touch the mind. For this purpose he binds the organs in the chains of discipline and controls them. By lighting the fires of detachment in the organs he expels the tendencies for sense objects hidden in the corners of the mind. He observes ceaselessly routines stricter that those of breath control. These are the indications of what is called self-restraint. (16:89-93).

Yajna or sacrifice Now I shall briefly tell about the indications of Yajna or sacrifice. Everyone, from a brahmin to a woman should, according to the rightful code of conduct appropriate to him or her, in the manner prescribed in the Shastras. For example, a brahmin observing the six rituals and a shudra making obeisance to him, both lead to a like sacrifice from each of them. Thus, everyone should perform the sacrifice as per his entitlement but let it not be contaminated by

the poison of the desire of fruits. And let one not think out of ego that “Oh! I have performed the sacrifice.”, for the code set by the Vedas must in any case be obeyed. Arjuna, this is what is called "appropriately conducted sacrifice". Such a sacrifice should be considered as a knowledgeable guide in the path of liberation. (16:93-99).

Personal study of Vedas God is the subject of discussion in the Vedas which one should constantly study in order to understand Him. For attaining Self, brahmins should contemplate over the writings about the Brahman in the Vedas. Others should frequently sing the songs praising God or utter His name. This is what is called the personal study of Vedas. (16:103-105).

Austerity Now I shall tell you the meaning of austerity (*Tapas*). To give away one’s all possessions is to put them to best use and that is real austerity. (16:106). Straining one's body, organs and life force for experiencing the Self is called austerity. All other types of austerities which people talk about must be critically examined. Austerity keeps alive in a person the sense of discrimination which separates “I am the living soul” feeling from the “I am the body” feeling. While contemplating on the Self, the intellect turns inwards. Just as when one wakes up both sleep and dreams vanish, similarly that which makes a person turn to contemplating about the Self is the real nature of austerity. (16:108-112).

Uprightness Just as life may be of diverse type but all have similar life-force, similarly to show gentleness to all is called uprightness. (16:113).

Non-injury To behave by words and actions and feelings with the intention of making the world happy is the indication of non-injury. (16:114).

Truthfulness Truthfulness is pointed but soft and bright but comfortable. Just as one cannot find a medicine that can cure a disease but does also not taste bitter, similarly a simile cannot be found for truthfulness. Water sprinkled on the eyes does not hurt the eyeballs but the same water is capable of breaking stones. Similarly truthfulness is hard like iron in crushing doubts but is sweet to the ears. With its strength it penetrates the principle of the Brahman. In short, that which is sweet but not deceptive like the song of a trapper, (16:115-121) and which does not hurt and proves to be true and which is without evil aspects, is to be considered as truthfulness here. (16:124).

Absence of wrath The state of mind in which a person does not get angry even by words which normally would make even a boy angry is called absence of wrath. 16:128-130).

Relinquishment Freeing themselves of the "I am the body" attitude, intelligent people give up worldly affairs. This is called relinquishment. (16:134-135).

Tranquillity After knowing the knowable (i.e. experiencing the Brahman), the state in which both the knower and the knowledge dissolve is called tranquillity. (16:137).

Non-calumny When one sees somebody drowning, he does not bother whether that person is a brahmin or a untouchable but thinks that saving him is his first duty. (16:143). Such a person, instead of bothering about the

failings of another, tries to overcome that by his own good qualities and does not taunt him about them. (16:149-150). Not taunting people for their failings by comparing them with perfect persons is the indication of non-calumny and there is no doubt that this is one of the resting stages in the path to liberation. (16:152-153).

Compassion Compassion is that which does not let one distinguish between high and low while helping to remove the miseries of the unfortunate. (16:155). When he sees the sorrows of others he thinks nothing of sacrificing everything he possesses in order to mitigate them. If he encounters a destitute, he does not go a step further without satisfying him. (16:157-158). His life is spent in helping the miserable. Such a person is compassion personified and I am indebted to him from birth. (16:162).

Lack of greed The state of mind when one is averse to enjoying the pleasures of this world or the world beyond even if they are available to him at his mere wish, and what more, when one has no desire of any kind for sense-pleasures is the indication of lack of greed. (16:166-167).

Gentleness A tender loving behaviour towards all creatures (16:170) and a life devoted to welfare of the world is the indication of gentleness. (16:174)

Humility When a person feels ashamed of being imprisoned in this body of three and a half hand-span length, of being born and dying again and again, of remaining in the uterus immersed in blood and urine to be cast as a human being, is the sign of humility. Only persons without blemish feel so ashamed, but others take pleasure in it. (16:179-182)

Absence of fickleness When life-force is controlled the organs of action become slow. Similarly, just as sun-rays do not come out after sunset, the sense-organs become dim after the mind is controlled. Thus all the ten organs become inactive by the control of mind and the life force. This condition is called absence of fickleness. (16:183-185)

Spiritual vigour When the determination to follow the path of Knowledge for attaining God is very strong then there is no dearth of strength. (16:186). The individual, anxious to realise his master the Soul, follows the difficult path towards the formless Brahman treating the sense objects like poison. In this path he is not hindered by the ritualistic rules nor is he attracted by the great Siddhis. This quality of mind, which goes towards God automatically, is called spiritual vigour. (16:188-190).

Forgiveness Now, forgiveness is the quality by which one, though superior among those who are tolerant, is not proud about being so. (16:191).

Fortitude Even when flooded with calamities, one holds courage and faces them as Rishi Agastya did. He tolerates all distresses of spiritual, divine and earthly origin. The quality which keeps a person from getting distressed in mind by maintaining one's courage is called fortitude. (16:193-196).

Cleanliness Cleanliness is like the purity of Ganges water filled in a clean gold pot. Because doing actions without desire of fruits and maintaining discretion in the mind is the indication of cleanliness from inside and outside. (16:197-198).

Absence of envy And just as Ganges water removes the bather's sins and troubles and at the same time also supports the trees on the bank while flowing to meet the ocean, (16:199), similarly such a person liberates those who are bound to this world and removes the difficulties of the afflicted. In fact, he gains his goal by helping others be happy. Not only that the idea of hurting anybody for his own success never touches his mind. These are signs of absence of envy. (16:200-204).

Lack of pride And just as Ganges felt shy when Shiva bore her on his head, similarly feeling shy after one gets recognition is the quality called lack of pride.

These are the twenty-six qualities of divine endowment and are the gift of the great emperor of Liberation. (16:207). How much can I describe it to you? It has to be experienced by itself. (16:212).

THE SIX DEMONIACAL ENDOWMENTS

Now, the demoniacal endowment is the creeper of sorrow in the heart and it is full of thorns of failings. Understand it thoroughly because even if an object only fit to be rejected is of no use to us, yet one should understand its nature properly before it is rejected. The set of serious defects which are brought together in order to subject beings to horrible tortures of hell is actually the demoniacal endowment. It is the storehouse of all failings. (16:213-216).

Hypocrisy The principal among the failings of the demoniacal endowment is hypocrisy. (16:217). If one publicises his practising of Dharma (the code of righteous behaviour) the companion and friend in this

world and the next, then instead of helping to take him towards liberation, it actually becomes a hindrance. The righteous behaviour becomes in effect unrighteous behaviour (Adharma) and this must be considered as hypocrisy. (16:222-223).

Arrogance Just as a beggar feels himself to be great just by a single alms, a person becomes haughty due to possession of women, wealth and learning, and by listening to praise and due to honour bestowed on him. (16:227). Swelling by pride of being rich is what is called arrogance. (16:229).

Conceit God is venerable to the whole world because it believes in the Vedas. Because it desires to gain a high position and likes to be immortal, people enthusiastically praise Vedas and God. But a person burns with jealousy and says that he is going to swallow God, poison the Vedas and destroy their power by his strength. Overcome by pride, he is unable to tolerate people uttering God's name. His nature is such that he gives step-motherly treatment to his own father for the fear that he will be a claimant to his wealth. Such a person is said to possess conceit and is arrogant. Such conceit is a certain path to hell. (16:230-236).

Wrath A person gets angry by seeing the happiness in others. (16:237). He is annoyed at seeing the learning, development, wealth and fortune of others. This is what is called wrath. (16:242).

Harshness He whose mind is like a snake-hill, eyes like the throw of an arrow, speech like a shower of cinders and whose other actions also are like a sharp saw and whose all external and internal behaviour is

troublesome to others is a very contemptible person and an icon of harshness. (16:243-245).

Ignorance Now I shall tell you the sign of ignorance. (16:245). The condition of blindness to thoughts of evil deeds, (16:249) lack of understanding of what is good and what is bad is called ignorance. (16:251-252).

Thus I have told you about the signs of all the six failings. (16:252). The demoniacal endowment has become strong because of these six failings. That it is founded only on six failings does not mean that it is unimportant. (16:255-256). On the other hand the coming together of these six can create horrible consequences to a person. He who, ignoring his inclination towards the path of liberation, immerses himself in the worldly affairs, descends down the ladder of rebirth to states even below that of the non-moving species (trees etc.). Thus I have explained to you the two types of endowments. (16:259-264).

WARNINGS ABOUT DEMONIACL ENDOWMENTS

Of these two endowments, the first i.e. the divine endowment is like the dawn before the sunrise of liberation while the second, the demoniacal endowment is really like iron shackles in the form of delusion. (16:265-266). There are well-established modes of behaviour of people possessing these two types of endowments. (16:271). Out of these the divine endowment has been discussed earlier in detail. Now listen carefully to what I am going tell about the demoniacal endowment. (16:275). The demoniacal endowment does not become evident unless it has taken shelter in the body. (16:277). After taking shelter in the

body it takes its possession and grows with it. Arjuna, I shall now tell you the signs of a person who is afflicted by the failings of the demoniacal endowment. (16:279-280).

Signs in Afflicted Persons: His mind is dark about thoughts that one should be inclined towards meritorious actions or averse to sinful actions. (16:281). People afflicted with demonical endowment do not understand what is action and what is non-action and they do not even dream about what is purity. (16:284). They do not bother about prescribed actions, do not follow the path of their elders and do not even know the language of proper behaviour. (16:287). Their behaviour is uninhibited and they are always averse to truth. (16:289). They may not have done anything, but by nature they are evil. Now I shall tell you about the strange things they talk. (16:292). Defiance of Vedas This universe has been going on from time without beginning and is controlled and ruled by God. Vedas clearly and openly decide about what is moral and what is immoral. People whom Vedas consider as immoral are punished by being sent to hell. Those who are considered as moral go to heaven where they remain happily. Now, these people (afflicted with demoniacal endowment) say that this arrangement which has been going on since time immemorial, is all false. They further say that people obsessed with yajnas perform them and get cheated. Those who love God worship idols and those who become yogis by wearing ochre coloured clothes get deceived by the illusion of Samadhi. One should enjoy whatever one can get by own capability. There is no merit other than this. Real sin is not being able to enjoy sensual pleasures due to physical weakness. Though it is a sin

to kill the rich, the wealth one gets from it is the result of merit. If strong destroying the weak is objectionable then how is it that big fish that eat small fish do not become extinct? Marriages are arranged on auspicious time between boys and girls of good families with the intention of producing progeny but who arranges the marriages of birds and animals who produce abundant progeny? Has anybody ever been poisoned by stolen wealth? Or, has anybody ever been afflicted by leprosy because he had loved and had sexual relations with another man's wife? Vedas say that God is the ruler of this universe and He rewards or punishes people according to their righteous or unrighteous behaviour and the fruits of the deeds in this world are obtained in the next. But one can neither see God nor the other world therefore it is all untrue. If the person who does meritorious or sinful deeds himself dies then who is there left to enjoy or suffer for them? Just as Indra lives happily with Urvashi in heaven, the worm in the mud is also lives contentedly in it. Therefore heaven and hell are not the consequences of meritorious or sinful deeds because in both places the lust is satisfied. When man and woman come together inspired by lust, the world is created therefore whatever is beneficial to the world is all supported by the lust. And because of the mutual enmity it is the lust that destroys the world. Thus the people afflicted with demoniacal endowment say that there is no reason for the creation of the world other than the sensual pleasure. Now let us not discuss these evil things further because they cause strain to the tongue. (16:295-313).

Evil Nature They despise god and spend time in meaningless talk. Not only that, they have already decided that God does not exist and they openly profess

that they are atheists. Atheism is well entrenched in them. Belief in the existence of heaven or fear of hell has completely disappeared from their minds. They are then caught in the trap of the body and like a bubble of gas in dirty waters they get immersed n the mire of sensual desires. (16:314-317). Persons with demoniacal endowment are born for destruction of people. They are like living victory towers of sin. Like fire which does not bother about what it burns, they destroy everybody who comes near them. I shall describe the enthusiasm with which they do all this destruction. (16:319-322).

They sustain insatiable lust, the foremost among the insatiable desires and add to it hypocrisy and pride. As they grow in age these persons with demoniacal endowment become arrogant. To the obstinacy is added foolishness too. And then who can say what they decide to do? Right from birth their tendency is to do things which create misery for others or destroy their life. They treat the world as trivial and brag about their own deeds. They spread the net of their desires in all directions. The persons with demoniacal endowment increase their load of sins enthusiastically. (16:322-329).

All their actions are thus governed by this approach while they live and they worry in the same way about their future after death. (16:330). The boundless worry does not leave them even at the time of death. Pining for futile sense-objects the persons with demoniacal endowment worry endlessly about attaining them. The idea that there is nothing better than enjoyment of sex is fixed in their minds. They are then ready to go to

heaven or hell or to the four corners of the world. (16:333-336).

The Trap of Desire and Anger Like a fish swallowing bait, desire for sense objects makes them heedless. If they do not get what they desire then they get trapped within the cocoon of dry hope that they will some day get it and if the desire is still not fulfilled then immediately hatred is born. And then they feel that there is no valour other than desire and anger. (16:337-339). The individuals who are pushed away from the precipice of desire crash on the rocks of anger below but even then their love for desire and anger does not diminish. Now, even if the desire arises in the mind, how can it be satisfied without money? Therefore they raid the world for earning money at least enough to satisfy the desires. They waylay a person and kill him or loot somebody. They scheme and plot for destroying somebody. (16:340-344). They kill others and loot their wealth and feel happy when they get it. (16:347).

The person with demoniacal endowment says, "I have taken away the wealth of many. I am happy and satisfied." And immediately greedy thoughts of looting more people rise in his mind. He decides to use his gains to earn more estate and ultimately own everything in this world by possessing everything that he sets his eyes on. He says, "I shall kill bigger enemies than what I have destroyed so far and I alone shall enjoy the wealth. Then they would become my servants. Besides, I shall destroy others and will be the master of the living and non-living universe. I shall be the king of this mortal world and gain all happiness. Even Indra will be put to shame when he sees my splendour. How can anything fail when I apply my mind to it? Who is

there more powerful than I to issue orders? Time may brag about his power as long as he has not seen the powerful me. I am really the bundle of all happiness. No doubt Kuber is wealthy but nothing as compared with me, and even Vishnu, husband of Lakshmi the Goddess of wealth is not as wealthy as me. The greatness of my family, my friends and relatives is such that even Brahmadeo will be lower in comparison. Therefore none of those who consider themselves superior in the name of God can be compared with me. Now I shall revive the now forgotten techniques of black magic and perform yajnas which will cause distress to people. As for people who sing my praises and entertain me through dances and dramas, I shall give them whatever they ask. I shall enjoy the pleasure of intoxicating food and drinks and of embracing women in these three worlds." (16:348-363).

Arjuna, the crazy persons of demoniacal endowment thus hope to smell the celestial flowers and babble away their thoughts like a person in delirium. Whirlwinds of hope are raised in the dust of their ignorance and spin through the sky of their daydreams. They desire endless sensual pleasures and then their daydreams get shattered. As delusions grow in their minds their desire for sensual pleasures also grows. That gives shelter to sins. When sins become strong and numerous, he has to suffer like hell even while he is alive. Therefore the persons with demoniacal endowment reach a place where trees have leaves like sharpened swords, where there are mounds of embers and oceans of boiling oil rage. They reach hell where agonies are lined up and Yama the Lord of death imposes fresh kinds of suffering every day. Even those who reach some better parts of hell spend their time in

performing yajnas. Now, the yajna rituals are beneficial but these people, like those in show business, make a show of their performance and make the rituals fruitless. (16:364-376). Their yajna need not have proper arrangements like kunda, vedi or a pandal, nor the usual materials. They are averse to the following of the prescribed rituals. They cannot tolerate the names of deities and brahmins uttered before in their presence. (16:384-385).

Now who will attend their yajnas as they are? But just as cunning people stuff a dead calf and show it the cow to get her milk, these persons invite people for the yajna rituals and loot them by accepting presents from them. Thus they perform yajna for their own benefit and desire that others should lose everything. Then they make a fanfare and pretend that they have been initiated in the learning. With this false status these crafty people become all the more conceited and their ego and excesses double. Then they use their power to see that no name other than theirs is mentioned around. Once their ego increases the ocean of arrogance overflows. Once arrogance becomes unleashed then lust also rises and in the combination of the two the anger also flares up. (16:386-394). When ego intensifies and arrogance gets entangled in lust and anger and the two come together, will they not kill any creature as they feel like killing? (16:396-397). These so-called initiated persons waste their own blood and flesh by getting obsessed with black magic. When they do this, the exertion they cause to their body harasses me who is the soul occupying the body. And when they harass other people by black magic, since I am in their bodies it is I who is really harassed. And whoever escapes rarely their attack by black magic they bombard

him by nasty talk. Saintly women, saints, donors, performers of yajnas, great tapasis, sanyasis, or devotees and great souls which are favourite places of my presence which have been rendered pure by fire-sacrifices are the targets of their sharp poisonous talk. And now listen to what I do to these sinners who try to hold me in enmity. (16:398-405).

HOW I PUNISH THEM

I punish the fools who bear human body but hate the world, by snatching their humanness and keeping them in species of Tama attribute, of type which have to suffer worst kind of filth and tortures. They are made to be born as tigers, scorpions etc. in places where not even a blade of grass grows for them to eat. They bite their own flesh to feed their hunger and after death they are reborn in the same species. Or, I make them be born as snakes which burn their own skin by their own poison and confine them to holes. I do not permit these evil souls even a breathing time for taking rest. And I do not take them out of this situation even after millennia pass. But this is only the first stage of their journey towards the final destination. Then imagine the extent of tortures they would suffer when they reach there. Thus they reach this low state due to their demoniacal nature. Then I snatch whatever little rest they get in species like tiger. Then I put them in pitch darkness. Thus these vile people reach this lowest state after suffering through all the species of Tama attribute. Even the tongue weeps when describing this Tama attribute and its very memory causes the mind to shudder. Alas! How these fools have earned hell! Why do they nurture the demoniacal endowment which leads to such a downfall! Therefore Arjuna, do not go

anywhere near the place where persons with demoniacal endowment live and I advise you to give up the company of those who possess all the six aspects of demoniacal endowment. (16:406-424). Wherever desire, anger and greed prevail is the place where inauspicious things grow. It is as if these three have been appointed as guides by all the sorrows in order that people experience them. Or it is as if all the sins have gathered together to push the sinners in hell. As long as these three failings do not arise in the mind there is no occasion for the Rourava type of hell mentioned in the Puranas. These three cause misfortunes with ease and pains become cheap. What is known as detriment i9n the world is not really the detriment. Real detriment is these three. These three lowest type of failings are the gateway to hell. One who heartily embraces desire, anger and greed is fit to be honoured in the assembly in hell. Therefore I am telling you repeatedly to totally give up this harmful trio of desire, anger and greed. (16:425-432).

One should bother about the four obligations (Dharma or righteous conduct, Artha or earning, Kama or conjugal life and Moksha or liberation) only after having got rid of the three failings. If anybody tells me that a person can profit with these three emotions remaining in the mind, I am not going to listen to it. He who is interested in personal welfare or fears self-destruction, should be alert and never give shelter these three. (16:433-435).

He who has abandoned these three failings becomes happy as a body feels happy when it is rid of phlegm, wind and biles, or as a town becomes happy when freed from thefts, betrayal and gossip or like one's

conscience when it is free from worldly, divine and spiritual sufferings. (16:439). He gains the company of saints and gets set on the path of liberation. Then he crosses the wasteland of births and deaths with the power of the company of saints and help of prescribed code of conduct. Then he gains a beautiful place of Guru's benevolence where bliss of the Self forever exists. There he meets mother Soul, the ultimate form of love and in her embrace the sounds of the world are not heard. Only he who rids himself of desire, anger and greed is able to attain the Self. (16:441-444)

But he who is not inclined towards Self-realisation and keeps himself engrossed in passions commits self-destruction. He does not heed Vedas which are like a father equally benevolent to all and which are like a guiding lamp showing what is good and what is bad. He does not bother about the dos and don'ts given in the Shastras and pampers the sense organs without considering the consequences. He does not leave the company of desire, anger and greed and obeys their dictate and leaving the straight path to liberation he goes by the sidelanes of uncontrolled behaviour. He is not able to free himself even for a moment from these failings and he does not think about it even in his dreams. He misses the enjoyments of not only the world beyond but of this world as well. (16:445-450). Having got in the clutches of death while obsessed with sensual pleasures he misses them in this world and having become ineligible for the world beyond, forfeits them there too. How can then there be any scope for liberation? (16:452-453). Therefore Arjuna, he who is keen about self-advancement should refrain from showing disrespect to the edicts in the Vedas. (16:455). The disciple who listens sincerely to the advice given

by the true Guru gains Self-realisation. (16:457). Similarly Arjuna, he who desires to achieve success in the four obligations should be reverent to the Shrutis (Vedas) and Smritis (Codes of conduct). Whatever Shastras advise to be avoided should be considered as insignificant as a grass blade even if it were a kingdom and whichever they advise should be accepted should not be opposed if it were a poison. How can anybody having such unshaken faith in the Vedas encounter anything harmful? There is no mother like Shrutis which can free one from harmful things and enhance the benefits therefore one should never forsake Shrutis which take you towards unification with the Brahman. Arjuna, you too should be steadily devoted to them. Because you behaved according to Dharma in past lives you have been reborn to bring the good Shastras to action and therefore you have consequently gained the name of "The Follower of Dharma". Therefore do not behave contrary to the Vedas. Actions should be planned as prescribed in the Shastras. Evil actions should be avoided. And whichever is really your dutiful action should be sincerely performed successfully. Today you are wearing the ring of seal, which the whole world recognises therefore, if you behave properly then people will also follow you, such is your worth. Thus Shri Krishna explained to Arjuna the signs of demoniacal endowment and their effects. (16:459-469).

CHAPTER 17

THREE KINDS OF FAITH

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

In the last *Shloka* of the sixteenth chapter Shri Krishna came to a definite conclusion that one's behaviour, good or bad must be guided by what is laid down in the Shastras. (17:21). At this, Arjuna said to himself, "What is this? How is it that there is no freedom of action without the rules set by the Shastras? (17:23). Who will bring the different Shastras together and come to a common conclusion from them? And even if one comes to a common conclusion, who will have time to act according to it? Who will live that long? And how can everybody have favourable situation regarding Shastras, money, place and time concurrently? Therefore it is not always possible to act according to the Shastras and in that case what should the ignorant seekers do?" The subject that Arjuna raised to get the advice of Shri Krishna is given in this seventeenth chapter. (17:26-30).

Arjuna said, "Why do you say that an individual cannot attain liberation without the Shastras? It can happen that the time and the place are not favourable for the study of the Shastras or a teacher is not available or the paraphernalia required for the study are not available and also, one is not adequately endowed with the intelligence due to unfavourable past karmas. Please tell me what kind of destiny, out of the *Sattva*, *Raja* and *Tama*, befalls those whose study of the Shastras has been impeded by the above situation, or those who are compelled to give up the study for lack of aptitude for it but at the same time emulate others who attained heaven, by performing the rituals as recommended in

the Shastras, or those who, considering the behaviour of persons learned in all the Shastras to be ideal and, like a blind person following the man in the front, worship Shiva and other deities, donate land etc. in charity, perform yajnas etc.? (17:35-45).

NATURE OF FAITH DEPENDS UPON ATTRIBUTES

Shri Krishna replied, "Arjuna, you find the study of Shastras as a means of liberation to be very difficult but it is not easy either to attain liberation through faith alone. Do not believe in depending on mere faith. Just as a brahmin keeping company of a Shudra becomes one, (17:49-51), similarly, though faith is basically pure, it becomes tainted when it befalls the lot of creatures, because creatures are naturally constituted from the three attributes due to the power of the timeless Maya. When two attributes become weak and the third becomes strong, the natural tendencies of an individual are moulded according to that attribute. The mind is moulded according to the natural tendencies, actions follow the mind, and the individual takes rebirth according to the karmas, the accumulated effect of actions. (17:55-58).

Just as a seed disappears to create a tree and tree gets incorporated later in the seed and the species of the tree does not disappear even after millions of aeons of this cycle, similarly even when a creature is reborn countless number of times, there occurs no change in the three attributes. The faith which has come to the lot of a creature is therefore according to these attributes. If *Sattva* attribute increases it leads to acquiring of knowledge but it is opposed by the other two attributes.

Pure faith based on *Sattva* attribute fructifies into liberation, but how will the *Raja* and *Tama* attributes remain quiet? When *Raja* attributes overrides the *Sattva* attribute then the faith (which is now tainted by the *Raja* attribute) sweeps together the karmas. And when the *Tama* attribute becomes strong the faith breaks down and entangles the creatures in all sorts of sense-pleasures. Thus Arjuna, the faith cannot be separated from the three attributes therefore the faith is qualified by the three attributes *Sattva*, *Raja* and *Tama*. (17:62-67).

Water is the essence of life but it becomes fatal if mixed with poison, pungent if mixed with pepper and sweet if mixed with sugarcane juice. Similarly, when *Tama* attribute increases, the creature that dies and is reborn acquires a faith that is *Tamasic* i.e. tainted by the *Tama* attribute. Thus the faith of a *Tamasic* creature is *Tamasic*. Similarly the faith of a *Rajas* (i.e. one tainted by *Raja* attribute) creature is *Rajas* and a *Sattvic* creature *Sattvic* (i.e. one tainted by *Sattva* attribute). Thus this structure of the universe is constituted from faith. But you should understand the impressions of the three attributes on it. Just as one can recognise the nature of the past Karmas of a person from his condition in this life, similarly there are signs that can indicate the three different forms of faith. I shall now describe them to you. (17:68-75).

Three types of faiths: Those, whose constitution is made of *Sattvic* faith, have their thoughts inclined towards heaven. They acquire all knowledge and choosing proper types of yajnas they reach the abode of gods; Those whose constitution is made of *Rajas* faith worship the Yakshas and demons who travel in the sky;

but those who are constituted from *Tama* attribute are like mountains of sins and are extremely hard-hearted and cruel. They make sacrifice of animals in cremation grounds to propitiate spirits and ghouls. These persons who are made from the essence of *Tama* attribute are the storehouse of *Tamasic* faith. There are thus three types of faith which I am describing to you only because one should see that the *Sattvic* faith must be preserved and the remaining two types of faith namely *Rajas* and *Tamas* should be rejected. (17:76-83). He who nurtures this *Sattvic* faith does not find the attainment of liberation cumbersome. Even though he has not studied Brahmasutras or independently understood the principles of the Vedas, but if he follows the footsteps of those who have become venerable to the world by keeping their conduct according to the meaning of Shrutis and Smritis and lives with *Sattvic* faith, gets same fruits as them. (17:84-87). He who emulates those who carefully perform as per the Shastras is saved even if he were a fool. (17:92).

Those who are not inclined towards the study of Shastras from their heart and do not permit persons learned in the Shastras even to enter the town, those who tease their elders doing worship and mock during the discourses by the learned, behave like an atheist driven by the pride of their high status and arrogance due to wealth. They fill the yajna vessels with their own and others' blood and pour it in the burning yajna fire as sacrifice to inferior deities and further sacrifice young children to fulfil vows. To obtain boons from inferior deities they obstinately observe seven-day fasts and perform other rituals. Thus they plant the seeds of self-torture and torture of others in the *Tamasic* heart and reap the harvest. (17:93-99). They leave the path of

the Shastras and rush hither and thither in the woods of delusion. They act under the influence of desires and consumed by anger beat others. Otherwise they bury even me in the ditches. The pain they cause to themselves and others actually are the pains caused to me that is the Soul. One should not even utter the name of such a sinner but I had to mention all this in order that he is cast out. (17:103-106). Arjuna, if you see such persons then remember me because there is no other atonement for it. Therefore one should always maintain *Sattvic* faith. (17:109-110).

Three types of diet: Secondly, one should keep in touch with those things which increase *Sattvic* faith and adopt a diet which will increase the *Sattvic* nature. Even otherwise, there is no means more effective than diet for moulding one's nature. (17:111-112). A person gets afflicted by wind, phlegm or biles according to the food he eats. (17:114). What one eats, accordingly the different chemicals are produced in the body and these chemicals support the feelings in the mind. The state of the mind depends upon the chemicals therefore a *Sattvic* diet makes the *Sattvic* quality grow. Any other diet would lead to growth of the *Rajas* and *Tamasic* natures. Listen carefully now to what a *Sattvic* diet is and what the indications of *Rajas* and *Tamasic* diets are. (17:116-119).

I shall first explain to you how the same diet affects in three different ways. The cook has to prepare food according to the taste of the eater and the eater is a slave to the three attributes. He behaves with three different types of mental attitude depending naturally upon the three attributes. Therefore diet is of three types and so are the actions like yajna, charity and

austerity (tapas). But first I shall explain to you about diet. (17:120-124).

Sattvic food: If by good fortune an individual is inclined towards *Sattvic* attribute then his tendency is to eat sweet food. *Sattvic* food items are by nature juicy, sweet, very oily and properly cooked. They are not big in size and are soft to touch. They melt on the tongue and feel tasty. They are juicy and soft and the liquid part in it is well absorbed within by the heat of the fire. Just as the words from the Guru's lips are few but have great effect, similarly one feels satiated by eating even a little quantity of these items. Also not only he *Sattvic* food tastes good while eating, its effects are also sweet. A *Sattvic* person has a special liking for such food. Such are the indications and qualities of a *Sattvic* diet. It increases the life-force of the eater.(17:125-132). For increasing the *Sattva* attribute this is the most appropriate diet. Growth of physical and mental strength is achieved by this diet. Then how can disease enter there? If one eats *Sattvic* food then he enjoys the fortune of good health. His actions bring happiness not only to himself but to others also. Thus the effect of this *Sattvic* diet is great and is useful to the body from inside and outside. (17:134-137).

Rajas food: Since we are on the topic of diet, I shall tell you about the kind of diet a *Rajas* person loves. A *Rajas* person loves food items which may not be digestible but are bitter like poison, burning like lime but sour, with large quantities of salt and salty materials added to it. The food he eats is so hot that it is as if he swallows fire itself. He asks for food that is so hot that one can even light a flame on the steam coming from it. He eats sharp food items that hurt without

wounding. Similarly he likes food that is dry like hot ashes but which will scald the tongue. He takes pleasure in eating hard food that needs grinding the teeth. Salad, that is already hot and pungent with mustard added on top and causes the mouth and nose to burn, putting even fire to shame, is what a *Rajas* person likes more than life. Not satisfied with such food, the *Rajas* person who has madly surrendered himself to the taste-buds, puts in his stomach, actually fire in the form of food. He rolls on ground after eating cloves and ginger and once he puts a of water it to the mouth he does not put it away. But that is not really food but it is like putting in the stomach items which will awaken the diseases in the body. As soon as they get this food they wake up and compete with each other. In this way, the *Rajas* type of food leads only to sorrow. (17:139-151).

Tamasic food: Now I shall also tell you about the food a *Tamasic* person likes but you will feel disgusted by it. Just as a buffalo eats the leftover soured food, a *Tamasic* person eats rotten and leftover food and does not even think that it will be harmful to him. Similarly, he eats in the afternoon or next day, the food that was cooked in the morning. A *Tamasic* person does not at all like well-cooked and fresh food. Instead, he prefers food that is half cooked or burnt. If perchance an occasion comes for him to eat good food, he keeps it aside like a tiger until it starts smelling. He eats with his wife and children, in a common dish, tasteless food which has been kept for a long time, has become dry or rotten, infested with worms and which has become like slime having been handled by children. He feels happy when he eats such dirty food. But he is not quite satisfied by this. The wonder is that he gets a strong desire for eating or drinking those things that have been

prohibited by the Shastras. Arjuna, he has a liking for eating such food and he is immediately penalised for it, for when he consumes such desecrated food, he becomes liable for sin because what he eats is not food but an affliction which fills the stomach. He gets some experience of what it feels like to be beheaded or be entering a fire, but he bears all that and therefore one need not tell further about the effects of *Tamasic* food. (17:153-168).

THREE TYPES OF YAJNAS

Similar to diet, yajnas are also of three types. Out of these I shall tell you the characteristics of the *Sattvic* yajna first. (17:169-170).

Sattvic yajna: Persons who perform *Sattvic* yajna use all their inner tendencies for gaining spiritual benefits without bothering about selfish material gains, (17:173), get totally engrossed with body and mind in the yajna rituals without any personal desires or expectations, and being detached about everything except Swadharma, (17:175-176), perform the yajna systematically according to all its aspects prescribed by the Vedas, arranging for the Kunda (fire-pit), pandal, platform etc., in such a way that would make it appear that the very Shastras have personified and made the preparations themselves. All the yajna materials are neatly arranged. If one sees the yajna pandal, one would feel that the very science of the yajna has come there for the sake of the yajna. The yajna thus performed systematically without the desire for self-importance, (17:179-182), or the yajna performed without desire of fruits should be considered as *Sattvic* yajna. (17:184).

Rajas yajna: *Rajas* yajna is also performed in the same systematic manner, (17:185), but it is performed purely with desire of benefits in mind like attaining heaven after death, getting honoured in public as an initiated person. The yajnas performed for gaining fame and with desires are *Rajas* yajnas. (17:187-188).

Tamas yajna: Just as marriage among birds and animals does not require a priest other than the mating instinct similarly Tamas yajna needs only a compulsion or insistence. (17:189). *Tamas* yajna is not bound by any rules therefore a *Tamasic* person is a libertine. He is not bothered about ritualistic rules and he does not find mantras to be necessary. Even a fly does not get any food there. He is inimical to brahmins so here is no thought of honorarium (dakshina) to them. Money is wasted unnecessarily but there is no trace of faith in all this. Thus, the yajna, which superficially looks like one, is a *Tamasic* yajna. (17:191-195).

THREE TYPES OF TAPAS

Tapas (austerity) also is of three types according to the three attributes. One of them leads to sin and another leads to emancipation. Now you may be anxious to know how tapas can be of three types therefore I shall tell you what tapas is. Tapas may be corporal, vocal or mental. Now listen to what corporal tapas is. (17:197-200).

Corporal Tapas: The feet of a person doing corporal tapas are always engaged in going to the temple of or going on a pilgrimage to the places of his favourite deity Shiva or Vishnu. His hands are ever ready for decorating the front yard of the temple, for supplying the materials for performing the worship rituals and for

serving God. (17:201-203). He prostrates as soon as he sees a Shivalinga or an idol of Vishnu. He serves brahmins who are venerable due to their learning and humility. Or brings succour to people who are tired by travel or tortured by calamities. He sacrifices even his body for serving parents who are the best among all the holy locations. He serves his Guru who is kind to impart knowledge and who goes and brings succour to them in this difficult world. In the fire of *Swadharma* he adds the practice of yoga to remove the impurity of ego. He makes obeisance to all creatures realising the same Soul exists in all of them. He is always ready for helping others. He controls from time to time his desire for having sex. Not wanting to repeat contact with a female body which he had had at the time of birth, he remains chaste all his life. Realising that there is life in every creature he does not tread on even a blade of grass and does not break anything. When the affairs of the body are thus purified, understand that the corporal *tapas* has reached perfection. I call this corporal tapas because it is performed mainly with the body. (17:204-214).

Vocal tapas: Now I shall tell you about the pure vocal tapas. (17:215). The speech of a person who performs this tapas is straightforward and pleases the listener without hurting him. He speaks to one but it is beneficial to all. His words makes one shed bad thoughts and lead to realisation of the Self. Like nectar, one does not get tired of them even after listening for a long time. He speaks only when somebody asks him something otherwise he keeps himself busy studying Vedas or in repeating the name of God. He has installed the three Vedas in the temple of his speech and converted it into a school of Vedas. The name of

Shiva, Vishnu or some other deity always occurs in his speech. This should be understood as the vocal tapas. (17:217-223).

Mental tapas: Now I shall also tell you the characteristics of a (person doing) mental tapas. (17:224). Free of entanglement of doubts, his mind is engrossed in the Self. He sees the Self as light without heat or space without vacuum. Just as limbs numbed by cold no longer feel it, his mind, having got rid of its fickle nature, does not exist any more. In this state he is not troubled by the strains of detachment and becomes free of greed and fear. Only thing that remains is the realisation of the Self. Lips which are capable of giving advice on the Shastras remain silent. Having attained Self-realisation, mind loses its mind-ness. In such a state, how can feelings occur in the mind? And how will the mind rush to sense pleasures through the organs? Therefore the mind is always free from any feelings. Arjuna, when the mind reaches this state it is fit to be called mental tapas. (17: 227-237).

Thus I have told you about the three kinds of tapas divided according to the aspects of body, speech and mind. Now I shall tell you about the three types of tapas classified according to the three attributes. Understand it with alert mind. (17: 238-239).

TAPAS ACCORDING TO THREE ATTRIBUTES

Sattvic Tapas: Arjuna, perform the three types of tapas which I explained to you with total faith and without keeping any desire for the fruits from them. When the tapas is performed with faith and pure mind sages call it *Sattvic* tapas. (17:240-241).

Rajas Tapas: When a person, in the name of tapas, creates duality with the intention of reaching the pinnacle of greatness, desiring for himself alone and nobody else the greatest honour in the three worlds, wanting that the place of honour in meetings or parties should be his, that everybody should praise only him, meet him and venerate him with special preference, and all important pleasures should be his, makes a show of tapas for increasing self-importance, for wealth and honour, that tapas is called *Rajas* tapas. (17:242-247). The tapas which is done for earning fame becomes infructuous and is wasted. Seeing it to be infructuous, he abandons it halfway and therefore that tapas does not have stability. (17:249-250). The *Rajas* tapas not only is unproductive bit remains incomplete too. (17:252).

Tamasic Tapas: Now if the same tapas is of *Tamasic* type then one gains neither he heaven nor fame. Due to foolishness people perform such tapas treating their body like an enemy. They burn their body by inciting the five fires within, Some burn myrrh on their head, some pierce themselves with hooks on their backs, some light fire around them and cause burns on their body, some perform fast at the same time holding their breath, some hang themselves upside down in smoke, some people stand immersed neck-deep in ice-cold river water on rocky floor, and some cut off pieces of flesh from own body. The tapas thus performed by torturing the body and with the intention of destroying others is called *Tamasic* tapas. (17:252-259).

THREE TYPES OF CHARITY

Thus I have told you about the three types of tapas based on the three attributes. Since the occasion has

arisen, I shall also tell you about the three types of charity based upon the three attributes. Now first listen to the characteristics of *Sattvic* charity. (17:263-265).

Sattvic charity: Wealth earned by behaving according to Swadharma donated respectfully to another (is *Sattvic* charity). Even when proper seed is available, land and water can be unsuitable; similar is the case with charity. (17:266-267). Charity takes place when *Sattva* attribute is coincident with favourable place, time, right beneficiary and wealth. Therefore one should make efforts to choose Kurukshetra, Varanasi or some other place of similar status. At the time of charity there should be solar or lunar eclipse or some such auspicious time. At such a place and time a person worthy of receiving charity, who is purity personified, should be found. He should be a brahmin who is the foundation of morality and abode of the Vedas who should be given one's wealth in charity. (17:269-275). He should be donated land etc. with desireless attitude without expecting anything in return for it. The person should be chosen such that there will not be any return gift of that charity. (17:277-278). And there should be no feeling of differentiation that "I am the giver and he is the receiver." The charity that takes place with all these conditions fulfilled is the *Sattvic* charity that is the best among charities. And the charity which occurs with the coincidence of proper place, time and worthy brahmin is faultless and just. (17:282-284).

Rajas charity: The charity made with the intention of future returns from it is of *Rajas* type. (17:289). Charity made with the desire of pleasures of the after-world and of so little amount that it will not even

suffice for a single meal and that too with a feeling that one has been totally robbed is of *Rajas* type.

Tamasic charity: Some people go to residential areas of foreigners or in jungles and forests or in camps or in public town-places in evenings or at night to give away wealth stolen at night very generously. This too they give to jugglers, prostitutes, gamblers or witches having got attracted to them. When the beauty of the women is accompanied by their dancing skills they fall for it and the false praises sung by the praise-singers reverberate in their ears. The fragrance of the flowers and scents puts them under the spell. Then they give away in charity what they have looted from others. I call charity of this type as *Tamasic* charity. (17:294-300). There is another aspect of it. That *Tamasic* person when he visits a holy place may meet due to his wealth a worthy person and swollen by pride may feel like giving him something in charity. But on account of lack of faith in him(the worthy person), he will not greet him and will not offer water and do other formalities like offering him a seat etc. let alone proper worship. Thus the *Tamasic* person behaves improperly and sends him away giving him a few coins without showing him any respect. He counts what he gives and sends him off with insults. The charity in which only money is utilised is called *Tamasic* charity in this world. Thus, I have told you about the three types of charity along with their characteristics.(17:301-308).

Thus I have told you about entities related to actions, from faith to knowledge, which are all encompassed by the three attributes. (17:313). To explain to you the *Sattva* attribute, I had to tell you about the characteristics of *Raja* and *Tama* attributes also.

Abandoning the latter two, you achieve success by means of the *Sattva* attribute. Perform yajna and other duties with this *Sattva* attribute and you will achieve Self-realisation. (17:317-318).
Arjuna, *Sattva* attribute has the power to impart success but the thing that gives liberation is a different thing altogether. Only with its help can one enter the realm of liberation. (17:319-321). River may be big but only when it joins the main river that its waters can reach the ocean. Now I shall explain to you how *Sattva* attribute can lead to liberation. (17:327).

AUM TAT SAT

The timeless Supreme Brahman, which is the resting-place of the entire universe, has a name made of three parts. Really speaking, that Brahman has neither name nor caste but Vedas have given that name in order that people immersed in the darkness of ignorance should understand it. The name to which the Supreme Brahman responds when people tortured by the sorrows of the world cry for relief is its symbolic name. (17:328-329). With the intention that it should be possible to have a link with the non-dual formless Brahman which should appear to people in dual form, the Vedas were kind enough to find a mantra. When called by that mantra the formless Brahman assumed form and appeared before them. But only those people who understand Upanishads know this. What more, Brahmadeo got the power to create the universe only by reciting this mantra once. Before it was created, Brahmadeo was lonely and confused. He was not able to recognise me the Supreme God, neither could he create the universe. But he got the power to create after he repeatedly recited that mantra of three syllables. He

then created brahmins and instructed them to obey the dictum of the Vedas and assigned performance of yajnas to them as the means of their earning. Next he created countless people and gave them the three worlds to live. Now listen to the characteristics of the mantra that brought greatness to Brahmadeo. The king of all syllables *Aum* is the first syllable, *Tat* is the second and *Sat* is the third. Thus, **AUM TAT SAT** is the threefold name of this Brahman which has blossomed like a fragrant flower from the Upanishads. If a person becomes one with this name and adopts *Sattvic* behaviour then liberation is at your service. (17:331-344).

Even if good actions are performed and the name of the Brahman uttered, one should understand the importance of its deployment i.e. systematic performance as prescribed in the Shastras (17:346), otherwise those good deeds are wasted. (17:349). Therefore I shall tell you how to deploy the three syllable name of the Brahman. (17:353).

Deployment of Aum: The three syllables of this name of the Brahman should be deployed in the beginning in the middle and at the end of a ritual (or action) respectively. It is by this artifice that Self-realised people attained Brahman. (17:354-355). Those who have studied Shastras do not give up performance of yajnas and other rituals. But in the beginning, they concentrate their mind on the syllable *Aum* and utter it. They start the ritual thus by first meditating on Aum and pronouncing it clearly. (17:358). These self-realised persons perform yajnas at the hands of brahmins in order to propitiate the benevolent deities by offering a lot of materials earned in ways prescribed by

Dharma. They perform havan (offering in fire) in prescribed ways into the three kinds of fire, viz. *Ahavaniya*. *Garhapatya* and *Dakshin*. In other words they give up undesirable worldly attachments by performing various types of yajnas. They give away in charity land and wealth to holy brahmins choosing proper time and place. By fasting on alternate days or by observing penance during alternate months they drain their body. Thus the rituals like yajna, charity and tapas which are known to be binding (non-liberating) when performed after pronouncing *Aum* facilitate the attainment of liberation. (17:360-365). This syllable which frees one from the binding nature of the Karmas like Yajna, learning, and Tapas is uttered in their beginning. Then, once it is seen that the actions are taking fruits the syllable *Tat* is used. (17:367-368).

Deployment of Tat: The Supreme Brahman which is beyond all universe and which observes everything by itself is also known as *Tat*. Keeping in mind that it is the root cause of everything and meditating on it, it is pronounced clearly. The Self-realised persons then say that may this be an offering made of all actions and their fruits to the Brahman which is in the form of *Tat* and may there be left nothing left of them for us to undergo their fruits. Thus, by offering the actions to the Brahman in the form of Tat, and disclaiming their authorship of them they become disentangled. Now it may appear that the action which started with *Aum* and executed by *Tat* has reached Brahman, but that is not the end of that action because duality still remains within the doer of the action. To assume that the action has reached Brahman itself is duality and this is what is stated by the supreme God through the Vedas. In order that this difference he feels between himself and the

Brahman should go and turn into Self-realisation, the word *Sat* has been reserved. When the action performed by uttering *Aum* and *Tat* reaches Brahman it has been praised as appropriate action. It is worth hearing about the deployment of *Sat* in the appropriate action. (17:369-379).

Deployment of Sat: This word *Sat* destroys the untruth and makes the true nature of Brahman appear clearly. That *Sat* does not take anywhere or anytime any other form because it is ceaselessly the form of the Self. Since this visible universe is unreal it is not a part of the *Sat* principle. It is in the form of the Self that the *Sat* principle is realised. By that the appropriate action takes the form of Supreme Brahman and removes the duality in the doer to unify him with it. The action, which, due to *Aum* and *Tat* becomes apparent, dissolves into the form of *Sat* i.e. the Brahman. Thus should one understand the internal deployment of the word *Sat*. (17:380-385).

The word *Sat* is useful to *Sattvic* actions in another way. Even though these good actions, performed as per one's entitlement, go well, sometimes there exists some shortcoming in them. (17:387-388). Even if an action is good it becomes evil because it lacks some quality. At such time the *Sat*, with the help of *Aum* and *Tat* elevates its status. With the strength of its *Sattvic* attribute it removes its evilness and raises it to the status of good. (17:390-392). Due to some error, the action crosses its limits and takes a forbidden path because sometimes a person loses his way or a discerning person becomes doubtful; what is not possible in day to day life? If by thoughtlessly the limits are crossed and the action becomes fit to be described as evil then if the

word *Sat* is used in preference to the other two (*Aum* and *Tat*), it turns the evil action into a good one. Its use is like that of nectar on a dead person. When you utter the word *Sat* by understanding its essence then you will realise that it is nothing but the Brahman. The letters **Aumtatsat** lead a seeker to the place from where the visible objects (material world) come into being. **Aumtatsat** is the name which indicates the inner aspects of the pure and attributeless Brahman and it is supported also by the Brahman. (17:393-402). Its utterance leads to attainment of the Brahman, therefore it is not a name containing mere letters but the very Brahman itself. For attaining it, whatever actions you do, be it a yajna, charity or tapas, whether they be complete or incomplete, if they are given in offering to the Brahman then they take the form of the Brahman. They no longer can be called complete or incomplete. Thus have told you about the power of the Brahman. I also told you nicely about the deployment of each letter of the name of the Brahman. If faith about it grows in your mind then you will be liberated from the birth and death cycles. If the action is properly completed by deploying the word Sat in the best possible manner then it will reach the status of the Vedas. (17:405-413). But if you leave this path and obstinately perform millions of yajnas, give the entire earth filled with precious stones in charity, and perform tapas by standing on one toe for thousands of years, then all those efforts are a waste. (17:414-416). By such actions one does not get happiness in this world then why expect that one would get in the next? Therefore whatever actions one does without keeping faith in the name of the Brahman is nothing but a tiresome exercise. (17:421-422).

CHAPTER 18

RELEASE THROUGH RENUNCIATION

(PART 1)

THIS CHAPTER IS THE PINNACLE

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says. "This eighteenth chapter is like the pinnacle of a temple. Once one sees it from a distance then he knows that the goal is near and it gives a feeling that one has actually met the deity inside. Similarly, the eighteenth chapter brings the whole essence of the Gita in view. (18:31-32). This eighteenth chapter reviews the entire Gita from beginning to end." (18:43).

ARJUNA THINKS RENUNCIATION IS BETTER THAT ACTION

At the end of the seventeenth chapter Shri Krishna told Arjuna that actions done without any faith in Aum Tat Sat, the name of the Brahman, are evil and wrong. Hearing this, Arjuna thought, "Shri Krishna is faulting persons involved in the ritualistic path. But the individual doer of actions is really blinded by ignorance and basically does not understand the nature of God. Then how should he know anything about Aum Tat Sat, the name of the Brahman? Besides, as long as *Raja* and

Tama have not gone from within him, his faith also would remain impure, then how would he have faith in the name of the Brahman? (18:60-64). These karmas (actions) are very mischievous. Terrible calamities like birth and death are incorporated in them. If by good fortune the actions are successfully completed then the doer acquires the worthiness for attaining knowledge otherwise the same action would cause his downfall. Many impediments are faced by the time an action is completed then when would a follower of the path of action get his turn to be liberated? Therefore it is better to break away from this trap of the path of actions, to give up all actions and adopt the path of renunciation (sanyas) which has no shortcomings. Renunciation and abandonment are two things in relation to which one does not hear about being affected by the karmas, and with the help of which Self-realisation can be attained. With their help the relation with the material world breaks. Therefore it would be better to ask Shri Krishna to explain the nature of renunciation and abandonment. (18:66-72). This eighteenth chapter contains the reply given by Shri Krishna to Arjuna's question on this subject. (18:74).
Arjuna asked, "Shri Krishna, Sanyas (renunciation) and abandonment seem to be have the same meaning. Please explain to me if there is any difference between the two. (18:87-89).

ABANDONMENT AND RENUNCIATION

Shri Krishna said, "The two words are really different but they appear to you as having the same meaning which I agree is also correct in a way. It is true that both words have the meaning which signifies abandonment but the reason why their meanings are

different is that if all (ritualistic) actions are abandoned then it is called Sanyas but if only the fruits thereof are abandoned then it is called abandonment. Now I shall explain to you about actions, the fruits of which are to be abandoned and about actions which are to be abandoned altogether. (18:90-93).

The routine actions take place naturally but actions with desire behind them do not take place without the will. Actions with desire of fruits behind them such as Horse-sacrifice yajna, digging wells, gardens etc., gifting away lands, establishing new towns, performing rituals with a lot of formality etc., are rooted in personal desire and it binds the doer to the enjoyment of the fruits thereof. (18:97-100).

Arjuna, once you acquire a body you cannot say no to the birth and death phenomena (18:100), similarly one cannot avoid enjoying or suffering the fruits of one's actions. Just as one cannot avoid repaying a loan, once a desire-based action is done, the fruits thereof remain in waiting to make you enjoy or suffer for them. (18:103). Even If a desire-based action occurs inadvertently, (18:104) it has the power to make you enjoy or suffer the fruits. Therefore a seeker should be careful not to do such actions even in fun. If performed, then they should be abandoned like poison. This abandonment (of desire-based actions) is called Sanyas or renunciation. Abandonment of desire-based actions means complete destruction of passions in one's mind. (18:106-109).

Routine and incidental actions The ritualistic actions which one has to perform such as at the time of an eclipse or when a guest comes are called incidental

(Naimittic) actions. (18:111). These are actually part of the routine duties but performed whenever an occasion arises and then it gets termed as incidental. What one does in the morning, afternoon and evening are the daily routine actions (Nityakarma). (18:114-115). This performance of routine actions is, like the fragrance within sandalwood, intrinsically virtuous and cannot be avoided. (18:117).

Abandonment Some people consider these routine and incidental actions as useless because they must be done routinely anyway. But just as food gives satisfaction (to the taste-buds) and removes hunger, similarly these routine and incidental actions give all-round results. (18:119-120). Performance of these routine and incidental actions removes the blemishes from one's mind, raises one's worth and because of it one reaches a good state in the after-world. But even though one gains such fruits of the routine and incidental actions, one should abandon those fruits. (18:122-123). Thus, while one should attentively perform the routine and incidental duties keeping oneself within the prescribed bounds, the fruits thereof should be abandoned totally. This abandoning of the fruits of actions is called abandonment. Thus I have explained to you abandonment and Sanyas (renunciation). (18:125-126).

Renunciation When renunciation occurs the actions done with desire do not bother. Prohibited actions are not done because they are prohibited and the routine and incidental actions are automatically nullified because of the abandoning of their fruits.

Trick of abandonment Once all account of all the actions is nullified then Knowledge of the Self comes

searching for you. By this trick those who abandon the fruits of the routine and incidental actions and renounce the actions with desire acquire the knowledge of the Self. (18:127-130). But those who do not adopt this trick but try to practice abandonment by guesswork do not at all achieve abandonment but get into more complications. (18:131). The actions which are not fit to be abandoned should not be abandoned while those which should be abandoned should not be coveted. If one misses the trick of abandonment then that abandonment becomes a burden. But a truly detached person does not even think about the prohibited actions. (18:133-134).

People who are not able to free themselves of the desire of fruits of their actions charge that all actions are binding. Just as a person who is slave to the taste-buds eats all sorts of food and blames it if he cannot digest it similarly persons incapable of abandoning the fruits but having desire for them blame the actions themselves and decide that they should be abandoned. Some others say that rituals like yajna etc. must be performed because there is no other means of purifying the mind. If one has to succeed in purifying the mind quickly then there should not be indolence in performing actions capable of doing so. (18:135-139). Actions should not be abandoned saying that they are arduous. Many people turn their mind to ritualistic actions with such thoughts. Thus, abandonment has become a debatable topic. Now I shall explain to you properly the real nature of abandonment and remove any differences in thinking regarding it. (18:142-144).

THREE TYPES OF ABANDONMENT

Abandonment may be considered as of three types. I shall now explain to you which these three types are. But even if I explain to you the three types of abandonment, understand that its essence is what I have told you just now. Listen to Me who is all-knowing, for my definite opinion as to what truth is. The seeker who is ever alert towards liberation from the bindings of this world should follow only this. (18:145-148).

Like a traveller who should not stop taking forward steps, one should not abandon the essential actions, namely yajna, charity and tapas. (18:149). As long as one is not sure about Self-realisation one should not be nonchalant about these rituals. On the other hand one should observe them with more attention according to one's entitlement. Performing more rituals is helpful for non-action. (18:152-154). When actions (rituals) are performed quickly and according to the prescribed rules then the attributes *Raja* and *Tama* are destroyed completely. (18:156). Action performed with faith destroys *Raja* and *Tama* and brings out the importance of the purity of the *Sattva* attribute. To gain the purity of the *Sattva* attribute righteous actions are like places of pilgrimage. The places of pilgrimage remove the external dirt while righteous deeds remove the internal dirt. Therefore righteous deeds are the places of pilgrimage for attaining purity of the *Sattva* attribute. (18:158-160). Like a river itself coming to the rescue of a drowning person, it is the actions which liberate a seeker from the binding. There is a trick in doing actions which, though basically they are binding, make them work as the main cause of liberation. Now I shall tell you about the trick which makes actions nullify themselves. (18:162-165).

He (who adopts the trick) does not swell by pride when the principle yajnas are being performed systematically. (18:166). Just as a person going on a pilgrimage at the expense of others does not become proud about it, (18:167) similarly he performs the rituals systematically at appropriate times without carrying the ego that he is the doer. He does not harbour any desire in his mind for the fruits of those rituals. Arjuna, one should first give up expectations about the fruits and then start the action. (18:170-172). He who does actions adopting this trick encounters the Self. Therefore one should do actions giving up the desire for fruits and the I-am-the-body consciousness. This is my message. I repeat again and again that he who is tired of the bindings of life should not disobey this my command. (18:175-177).

Tamas abandonment When one abandons angrily all actions, thinking that actions bind, I call that abandonment a *Tamas* abandonment. It is like cutting one's head because of the headache. (18:178-179). Because of his confusion, the *Tamas* person does not understand the trick of eliminating the affliction of the actions by actions themselves. Therefore he abandons the duties which have come to his lot by his *Swadharma*. You should not even touch such a *Tamas* person. (18:182-183).

Rajas abandonment Even while knowing fully what his entitlements and duties are, he is indolent about them fearing the labour involved. (18:184). Or else, he begins an action knowing that it is so prescribed but as soon as it becomes laborious he abandons it in the middle. He says. "It is by great fortune that I have got an admirable thing like this body, then why should I

make it toil like a sinner? If happiness is to be gained later by doing actions now then I do not want it. Why not make best of the luxuries I have now?" Abandoning actions because they are laborious is called *Rajas* abandonment. This is also an abandonment but it does not give the fruits of one because he foregoes actions due to of his attachment to the body. (18:189-193, 195).

With the rise of Knowledge, all actions vanish along with the ignorance and that is really an abandonment of actions which leads to liberation. He who abandons actions out of ignorance does not gain this liberation. Therefore the *Rajas* abandonment should not be considered as abandonment. Now, while on the subject, listen also to which abandonment leads to liberation.(18:196-199).

Sattvic abandonment He performs systematically, as prescribed and with love, whatever actions have come to his lot naturally as his entitlement (according to his caste). But he does not keep in mind that it is he who is performing them. Also he abandons the desire of their fruits. (18:200-201). Actually, ego about actions and desire for fruits are the ones which are called bindings of the actions. One who keeps away from these two while performing prescribed actions does not become unhappy. The most superior tree of abandonment begets the large fruits of liberation therefore this abandonment is known in the world as *Sattvic* abandonment. (18:205-207).

When actions are abandoned after abandoning the fruits the attributes *Raja* and *Tama* get destroyed. Then the pure *Sattvic* attribute causes the light of Self-realisation

to shine and removes the illusion of the reality of the world. (18:210-211).

The duties which fall to his lot due to the past karmas are, in his view, without blemish hence he does not bother about happiness or sorrow. He is not excited by the thought that a duty is auspicious or unhappy by taking it to be inauspicious. He does not carry any doubts in his mind about whether a particular duty is auspicious or not. When the feelings of duality that "This is the duty" and "I am the doer of that duty" which separate the duty and the doer, do not enter his mind then it is an abandonment of *Sattvic* type. With this manner of abandonment actions are completely abandoned. If they are abandoned in any other manner then they bind you more. (18:212-217).

Turning actions into non-actions Those who are indolent about their duties after they acquire the body are rustic simpletons. (18:218). Is it not foolish to try to abandon actions as long as the impression that I am the body is sustained? One can erase the sandal-paste put on the forehead but how can the writing of one's future on it be erased? One can stop the prescribed rituals after they are begun but how can the actions of the body be stopped? Because, even if a person is asleep, the action of his breathing continues automatically and it continues even if he sits doing nothing. The actions which are associated with the body cannot be abandoned while we live or even after death. It can be abandoned only by one trick and that is, while doing the actions one should not be in the clutches of the desire of the fruits thereof. If the fruits of the actions are offered to God then by his benevolence one attains Self-realisation and that destroys all actions along with

the ignorance. Abandoning actions in this manner is the real abandonment. Therefore he who has abandoned actions in this way is great abandoner. I am again telling you that he alone should be considered as true abandoner in these three worlds who, by abandoning the fruits of actions has turned them into non-actions. (18:222-232).

Unfavourable, favourable and mixed actions

Arjuna, action is of three types and they alone have to enjoy or suffer for it, who do not give up the desire for the fruits. After begetting a daughter her father is released from his ties to her only when he gives her away in marriage and the son-in-law who accepts her gets caught in them. (18:233-234). Whether one does the action out of the ego of one's capability or after abandoning the desire of its fruits, the action alone cannot bind the doer in either case. Only he who desires the fruits gains them. But he who does not accept the fruits even after doing the action does not take rebirth anywhere in these three worlds because it is the result of the fruits of the actions. Deities, humans and immovable life constitute what is known as the world and are themselves result of three different types of fruits of actions. The same action is of three types, namely unfavourable, favourable and mixed. (18:236-240).

The fruits of actions of those who are full of lust and transgress in their behaviour by doing forbidden evil deeds and are reborn in low forms such as worms, insects, earth, stones etc., because of that are called unfavourable fruits of action. (18:241-242).

The fruits of actions of those who respect *Swadharma* and do meritorious deeds according to one's entitlement as prescribed in the Vedas and then attain the bodies of deities like Indra etc., are known as favourable fruits of actions. (18:243-244).
When truth and untruth are mixed a third type of entity is created, therefore when an action contains good and bad deeds its fruits lead to being reborn as a human being. This is what is called mixed fruits of actions. (18:245-247).

Nullifying the fruits of actions These are the three types of fruits of action in this world. Those individuals who get entrapped in the desire of the fruits of actions are compelled to enjoy or suffer them. (18:248-249). People who continue doing actions while they are living may advance materially but they have to undergo the enjoyment or suffering of those actions after their death. (18:251). When a grain from a ear of corn falls on ground it sprouts and gives rise to another ear of corn. The grain from that ear again falls on ground and again sprouts to give another ear and this cycle goes on. Similarly, while undergoing the fruits of actions other fruits of actions are created. (18:253-254). The burden of the fruits increases in the order - goal and means, and those individuals who do not give up the desire of the fruits of action get entangled in the material world. On the other hand, those who nullify the actions even while doing them by giving up the desire of their fruits cause the effects of the fruits to cease. (18:256-258).

With the help of pure moral behaviour and the nectar of Guru's benevolence, Self-realisation comes to fruition and the distress caused by the attitude of duality ends.

The three types of fruits of actions which are responsible for the creation of illusion about the reality of this universe vanish and in that state, the fruits and their enjoyer both dissolve. Those who have been successful in adopting renunciation (sanyas) of knowledgeable actions are liberated from the troubles of birth and death arising out of the fruits of actions. How can they, whose vision has reached the Self due to such renunciation, feel that the deeds are different from the doer? (18:259-262). Once the fruits of actions are abandoned, the material knowledge vanishes (and the seeker attains unity with the Brahman) then who is going to enjoy the fruits and who is going to impart the enjoyment? Therefore in the case of an renunciate (Sanyasi) the talk of actions is not at all applicable. (18:266-267).

As long as ignorance remains within and an individual is induced to do good or bad actions by virtue of his capability and his attitude is dualistic, there exists a separateness between the Soul and the action (18:269), but only the ignorance shows it as such. (18:275).

CAUSES OF ACTIONS

There are five causes due to which actions of an individual frequently occur. I shall describe them to you. (18:277). But perhaps you already know them because Shastras have prominently described them. They are well known through the elucidation of Sankhya philosophy in the realm of the Vedas. These are the basic causes which are essential for success of the actions. But even so, do not relate them to the Soul who is the master. (18:278-280). Arjuna, we were talking about how all actions are separate from the

Soul. (18:296). It is verily a fact that all actions originate by these causes without the knowledge of the Soul and the five causes combine to give a shape to the actions. The very same five causes are the purpose of the actions. There, the Soul is detached and does not constitute a cause or an incidental motive for it. It neither does actions nor assist in leading the action to completion. Just as sky is different from the day and night (18:304-308), similarly though good and evil actions do take place in the individual, the Soul remains separate from them. (18:313).

First cause Body is the first cause (of actions) and is the seat of action because the enjoyer along with the objects to be enjoyed resides in it. There is no other place for an individual to experience the pleasures and sorrows created by Maya after toiling day and night using the ten organs. Hence the term "seat of action" is used in reference to the body. It is the residence of the twenty-four principles and the entanglement of the binding and the liberation is resolved here. It is this body that supports the three states wakefulness, sleep and dream therefore it has been named as the body. (18:315-320).

Second cause Second cause of actions is the doer. This doer is the reflection of the consciousness. (18:321). Forgetting its own nature, under the “I am the body” illusion, it appears in the form of the body. The consciousness, which has forgotten its true nature of the Self, is known as an individual. That individual is pledged to live with the body in every way. Due to delusion he claims that all actions done by the body are actually done by him and therefore that individual is called the doer. (18:324-326).

Third cause Even though the power of understanding of the intellect is same, it appears in different ways through different organs. This is called manifold distinct functions (Prithagvidha Karan). It is the third cause of actions. (18:330-331).

Fourth cause The air has ceaseless power of action which manifests itself differently in different places. When it appears through the tongue, it is known as speech, and when it is expressed through hands it is called give and take transaction, when it is manifested through feet it is called walking and when it goes through urine and faeces it is called cleansing. It is called vital air (Pranavayu) when it gives rise to the Aum sound while moving from navel to the heart. The same vital air when it moves around in the upper parts is called Udana, when it comes out through the lower end it is called Apana, while when it occupies the whole body it is called Vyana. When it supplies the alimentary juices all corners of the body and gets filled in all the joints then it is called Samana. And the actions like yawning, sneezing, burping etc. are the manifestations of the minor aspects of vital energy namely Naga, Kurma, Krikal etc. (See Ch 6). Thus the power of action of air which has different names when it behaves differently is the fourth cause of action. (18:333-343).

Fifth cause The intellect alone is the best among all the inner properties of an individual. It excels by the strength of the organs and the strength of the organs is supported by the group of the presiding deities. The presiding deities like Sun etc. give strength to respective organs like eyes etc. This group of presiding deities is the fifth cause of actions. Thus I have

explained to you the root causes of all actions. Now, the same root causes lead to countless actions. I shall explain to you the purpose due to which this happens. (18:348-352).

Mind, the cause for intent of actions: Arjuna, mind is the cause for intent for actions and once that intent is born it finds its expression through speech. In the light of the speech the path of action becomes clear and the doer begins the task of doing the action. Because of that the body itself becomes the purpose of the actions of body. (18:357-359). The actions of mind, speech and body become the purpose of mind, speech and body because they (mind, speech and body) are involved in the actions of the body etc.. (18:361, 365).

BIRTH OF ACTIONS

When body, speech and mind join the five causes (body etc.) actions are born. If the action is done as prescribed in the Shastras then it becomes a just action and also becomes the cause for just behaviour. (18:366-367). The action which takes place by coming together of the purpose and the cause is a blind action. (18:370). But if the same is done consciously with the support of the Shastras then it become a just action. If the unrestrained action which takes place by the combination of purpose and cause is not done as per the Shastras then it is as good as not done. Such action is an unjust action and is the cause of immorality. (18:375-376). Thus the actions which take place due to the five causes also have five purposes and the soul is also involved in them due to its being in contact. (18:377). The soul makes the actions discernible without itself taking their form and without being the

doer. (18:378). But a person whose intellect is restricted only to the body because of the I-am-the-body illusion is in the dark about the Self. He who has considered the body itself as the Soul, God and Brahman is under the impression that it is the soul who is the doer but really speaking he is not definite even about that for he considers that it is the body that is the doer. That he himself who is the Soul is beyond actions and is only a witness to them is something he has never heard of. Therefore it is no wonder that he gauges the immeasurable Soul with the measure of the body! (18:382-385). It must be said that he who does not even permit the name of Shastras or Guru to be uttered in his presence survives on the strength of his foolishness. With the understanding that body itself is the Soul he imprisons himself within the body with the strong walls of the actions. (18:390-392). He who attributes the actions of Maya to the Soul continues accounting for the actions for millions of aeons. (18:394).

NON-ATTACHMENT TO ACTIONS

Now I shall tell you how to recognise a person who does not get attached to the actions even after doing them. (18:396). While we think of such a liberated person we ourselves become liberated (18:397) - one regains the Self while thinking of the saints therefore one should sing and hear the praise the saints. (18:400). Such a person does not get attached to the fruits, good or bad, of his actions. I shall tell you through indirect arguments the characteristics of such a person who has gone beyond the actions. (18:401-402).

He, who was experiencing the universe as a dream during the sleep state of ignorance for a long time, woke up to experience the bliss of the Brahman after hearing the great dictum "You are that" with the power of Guru's grace, not just by having him keep his benevolent hands on the head but having him to pat it. (18:403-405). Just as after waking up the dream disappears the feeling of "I" and "mine" does not remain in his mind. (18:408). When a person who has reached Self-realisation sees a visible object the object and the seer both merge with the Self. (18:410). When, due to the misunderstanding that action is different from the doer, an imputation made about the Soul being the doer vanishes, only the state of the Self remains. Would he, who is the ruler of this state of the Self, maintain the I-am-the-body feeling? (18:412-413). How would a person who has the knowable and the knower united within him possess the I-am-the-body ego? (18:418). Whatever he does becomes his own form (of the Self), then which actions should he claim as his? (18:420). He too, who feels that the ego as the doer is meaningless, continues doing actions as long as he has his body. (18:422). Even though the I-am-the-body ego has gone the nature which has created the body gets the actions performed by that body. (18:428). Because of the five causes (body etc.) the actions occur naturally without any movement on the part of the Soul. Because of the influence of the earlier lives these five causes and purposes induce many actions whether those actions destroy the entire universe or create a new universe. (18:431-433). Whatever may be the case he remains in the body without the I-am-the-body feeling. (18:435). He is not aware of the happenings of the world but those who see him materially as a body consider him to be the doer.

(18:436-437). He who has woken up to the nature of the Self and the attitude of the seer has dissolved along with the scene is not aware of what his organs are doing. (18:441). Bodily movements of a person who is liberated from the birth and death cycles occur as per the karmas of earlier lives but because they do not realise it people call him the doer. By his natural actions even if the three worlds are destroyed one should not charge him with it. A man of Knowledge does not possess feeling of duality therefore there is nothing else that he can destroy. (18:447-449).

Just as the Ganga does not get impure even after another river meets it similarly his intellect is not affected by the thoughts of sin and merit. (18:450). How can the intellect of a person who does not consider his actions different from himself be affected by them? Therefore he who himself has become the triad of the action, the doer and the cause does not get bound by the action done by his body etc.. The individual, considering himself as the doer, works skilfully with the five types of intents doing innumerable righteous and unrighteous actions my means of the ten body organs but the Soul has no connection with this activity. You may say that the Soul helps in the preparedness for these actions but that is also not true because the Soul is Brahman and only a witness (Chidrup or form of Brahman) then how will he permit intent to act? The intent to action which makes people toil does not affect the Soul. Therefore one who has attained Brahman cannot at all be trapped by actions. It is the triad that is responsible for depicting improper type of knowledge in the light of ignorance. (18:450-460).

IMPROPER TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE

The triad of Knowledge, knower and the knowable is the root of the universe. The inclination to act comes from it. Now I shall explain to you forms of each member of this triad. (18:461-462).

Knowledge is the name given to that which makes an individual experience pleasure and pain and vanishes while in deep sleep. The individual is the knower. That which is experienced by the individual is what is called knowledge. This knowledge born of the ignorance of the Self, distributes itself in three parts as soon as it is created. It keeps the knowable in its front and knower at its back and connecting them creates interaction between the two. This knowledge, the reach of which is limited up to the boundary of the knowable and which gives different names to different things is without doubt ordinary knowledge. Now listen to the characteristics of the knowable. (18:465-471).

Sound, touch, form, smell and taste are the five ways through which knowable becomes known. Just as the same mango is known by taste, colour, smell and touch, similarly even though the knowable is one it is known through five organs. Therefore knowledge is of five types. (18:472-474). The place where knowledge obtained through organs ends is the knowable or the sense object. Thus I have explained to you the characteristics of knower, knowledge and the knowable. (18:475-477).
This Knowable becomes the cause of three types of actions. (18:477). Though the Knowable is of five types by virtue of the five senses viz. sound, touch, form, smell and taste, it is only of one type, either liked

or disliked. When the knower knows even a little about a knowable object he tends to either accept it or reject it. (18:478-480). This knower rushes to the sense objects like a crane rushing to catch a fish as soon it sees it. (18:480, 484). Therefore Arjuna, all actions originate from the knowledge, the knowable and the knower. (18:485).

If the knower likes the knowable sense-object then he cannot tolerate a moment's delay in enjoying it. But if he dislikes it then every moment of delay in abandoning it seems to him like aeons. (18:486-487). Then he does actions in order to accept or reject it. (18:489). Thus the knower becomes the doer of actions. (18:491). He who, with the desire of sense pleasures, makes the organs work becomes the doer and then knowledge becomes the cause or in other words the means and consequently the knowable becomes the action. In this manner the basic nature of the knowledge changes. (18:493-495). By giving impetus to the organs knower is caught in the ego of being the doer. Listen to the characteristics of the doer under these conditions. (18:497).

Intellect, mind, mindfulness and ego are the four internal organs and skin, ears, eyes, tongue and nose are the five external sense organs. The doer takes a measure of the possible actions with the help of inner organs and if he thinks that the action is going to give him pleasure then he makes the eyes etc. the ten external organs (five organs of sense and five of action) work until he gets the outcome. On the other hand if he thinks that the action would result in pain or unhappiness then he inspires the ten organs to abandon it. Like a king making people toil day and night for

unpaid revenue he makes the organs work day and night until the pain or unhappiness is completely removed. When the knower thus engages the organs to accept or abandon the action he is called the doer. (18:498-505).

We call the organs as means of action because the doer engages them to do actions. That which encompasses the acts done using these means is what is meant by action in this chapter. (18:506-507). Just as the intellect of a goldsmith encompasses the ornament similarly, without doubt, that which encompasses the acts of the doer is the action. (18:508, 510). Thus I have told you about the characteristics of action, doer and the means of action. Here, the knower, knowledge and knowable are the provokers of actions while the doer, the means and the deed are the aggregation of actions. (18:511-512). The triad of the doer, means and the act of doing are the lifeline of action therefore wherever there is an ego "I am the doer of this deed" the Soul keeps away from such actions. Therefore there is no need to tell you separately that Soul is different from actions. You already know it. (18:514-516).

KNOWLEDGE, ACTION AND THE DOER

The knowledge, action and the doer, which I explained to you, become of three kinds due to the three attributes (*Sattva*, *Raja* and *Tama*). You should not trust the triad of knowledge, the action and the doer because two of the attributes lead to binding and the *Sattva* attribute alone is capable of leading to liberation. I shall explain to you the features of *Sattva* attribute which are clearly explained in the Sankhya doctrine. That Sankhya doctrine is an ocean of thoughts, it is the moon, which

makes the lotus of Self-realisation bloom and the best among the knowledge giving doctrines. It is the Sun which distinguishes between *Prakriti* and *Purusha* (Nature and the Supreme Self) who are enmeshed together like the day and the night. This doctrine gauges the immeasurable ignorance by means of twenty-four principles and leads you to the experience of the bliss of the Supreme Principle. Arjuna, the features of the three attributes described by the Sankhya doctrine is as follows. (18:517-523).

These three attributes are so great that they have turned all things in the world into three types by their power and consequently everything from Brahmadeo to a tiny insect have been transformed to the three types of attributes. But first I shall tell you about the principle by which this entire universe has come into the clutches of these three attributes. In order to see anything clearly the eyesight has to be clear first. Similarly if the knowledge is pure then it is possible to understand the real nature of things. Therefore I shall tell you about *Sattvic* knowledge. (18:524-528).

Sattvic knowledge Arjuna the knowledge into which the knowable merges together with the knower is *Sattvic* knowledge. (18:529). This Knowledge sees no difference between individuals from Shiva to a blade of grass. (18:531). When the knowable is seen by the light of this knowledge no difference is perceptible between the knower, knowledge and the knowable. (18:533). Knowledge which does not notice visible things is the *Sattvic* knowledge. Just as an observer sees his own reflection in a mirror similarly knower sees knowable as knowledge (which is also himself). His *Sattvic*

knowledge is the temple of liberation. Now listen to the characteristics of *Rajas* knowledge. (18:535-537).

Rajas knowledge That which goes by presupposing differences among creatures is *Rajas* knowledge. That knowledge has splintered itself into pieces by assuming diversity among creatures and tricked the knower. That knowledge spreads the paraphernalia of Maya around the premises of Self-realisation and shows the individual the play of the three states of wakefulness, dream and sleep. (18:538-541). Because of the differences in the name and form this knowledge is distanced from the non-duality. (18:545). The feeling of one-ness has vanished from the knowledge by the understanding that there are differences among creatures. The knowledge which considers things as different from each other in various ways and distinguishes them as big and small is the *Rajas* knowledge. (18:547-548).

Tamas knowledge Now I shall tell you about the characteristics of *Tamas* knowledge. That which is bare and not covered by the fabric of the rules of the Shastras is the *Tamas* knowledge. Therefore Shrutis (Vedas) turn their back to it. The Shastras which follow the Vedas have also charged that this knowledge as despicable and relegated it to the realms of the Mlenccha (non-Hindu) religion. Such knowledge does not get hindered by any rules in corporal relations, nor does it find any object objectionable. (18:549-552). In the heat of enjoyment of sense pleasures it does not think about avoiding objectionable actions and or of doing those prescribed by the Shastras. It rushes to enjoy whatever sense pleasures it comes across. Without bothering about what should be eaten or

avoided, what is proper or improper, it thinks that what it likes is only sacred. It only knows that women are for sexual enjoyment only and is eager to keep relation with them. It keeps friendship only with those whose contact is profitable to its selfish motives and not with those who are its relatives. *Tamas* knowledge thinks that the whole world is meant for their benefit. It feels that the whole world is something that should be enjoyed. It thinks that all actions are for filling the belly. He is ignorant about what actions should be done and what should be avoided. His intellect does not go beyond the thinking that body is the soul and god is a stone idol. He thinks that after death the soul is destroyed along with actions and no one is left to experience the fruits of action. (18:557-568). If God is a witness to one's actions and makes him experience the fruits thereof then one can simply sell away the idol of God and spend the money. If one says that the village (local) deities control them then why do the hills over the rest of the country keep quiet? And if at all the *Tamas* knowledge believes in God then it considers only the stone idol as God and that the body itself as soul. It thinks that the concept of sin and merit is false and one should enjoy the sense pleasures voraciously. They are certain that what is seen and what pleases the sense organs is the only reality and this understanding of theirs grows day by day. (18:569-573). The *Tamas* knowledge is meaningless and useless like the life of a eunuch. We call it as knowledge in the same way as we call a undrinkable liquid as drink. Actually instead of knowledge it should be considered as *Tama* attribute itself. (18:576-581).

Thus I have told you about the three kinds of knowledge along with their characteristics. Now, the

doer does actions in the light of these three kinds of knowledge. The same action becomes of three kinds due to these different kinds of knowledge. Now listen first to the characteristics of *Sattvic* actions. (18:582-585).

Sattvic actions Just as a faithful wife embraces her husband by herself similarly that action which comes to one's lot by one's entitlement, the action which gives decorum to the entitlement when regularly performed, is the proper routine action. If it is joined by incidental action then the combination is good like fragrance dabbed on a gold ornament. Action should be performed with all one's mind and heart, making an offering of it to God without keeping desire for fruits thereof or without feeling happy if the action is successful or sorry if it is not. Actions done in this skilful way are may be called *Sattvic* actions. (18:586-594).

Rajas actions Now I shall tell you about *Rajas* actions. A person doing *Rajas* actions does not speak properly with his parents but like a fool shows respect to everybody else in the world. (18:595). He does not get up from his seat to perform the essential routine and incidental actions but when it comes to actions of pleasure and lust he does not spare any efforts. (18:597-598). Such a *Rajas* doer labours a lot keeping in view the future fruits of his efforts but feels that he has not laboured enough. With desire of fruits in mind he does many actions as prescribed and systematically and after he has done them announces to the world about them distributing tokens of gift to establish that he is religious. Then his mind is filled with so much ego that he stops respecting his parents. Whatever actions he

does with ego and desire of fruits in mind he does without sparing any efforts. (18:601-606). Such people like labours. They do these labours with the attraction of the pleasures in heaven. The action which is thus laborious and done with desire of fruits is *Rajas* action. (18:608-610).

Tamas actions Now listen to the characteristics of *Tamas* action. That which is the dark dungeon of slander and which is the successful culmination of the birth of prohibited actions and sin is *Tamas* action. (18:611). Just as drawing a line on water does not result in anything similarly the fruits of such action cannot be seen and the action is wasted. (18:612,615) The action done by toiling the valuable body and spending wealth destroys the happiness of the world. (18:616). *Tamas* action not only destroys everything belonging to the doer and injuring his body but it injures others as well. (18:619). The *Tamas* doer does actions without thinking about his own capability. While doing that action, due to indiscretion and ego, he sets upon for the work without bothering about his own capability, propriety of the occasion, and whether he will gain anything by it. (18:621-623). He proceeds without thinking of the past and future, without distinguishing between right and wrong ways and does not distinguish between proper and improper or whether a particular thing belongs to himself or to others. Thus, I have explained to you how action has become of three types due to the differences in the three attributes. (18:625-627).

Due to the three types of actions the doer also becomes of three types. Now I shall describe to you a *Sattvic* doer first. (18:628-630).

Sattvic doer A *Sattvic* doer performs his routine and incidental acts but they should not be called fruitless. These acts never go waste because Arjuna, how can fruit itself beget fruits. He does many acts with respect but does not keep ego of being the doer. In order to do acts worthy of offering to God he selects proper time and place and decides with the help of the Shastras which acts should be done. Combining the organs and the inclination he binds himself with a set of rules without letting his mind waver towards the fruits. He takes care throughout his life to develop excellent courage in order to succeed in the control of the organs. And while doing his duties, driven only by the love for Self-realisation, he does not bother about physical happiness. While doing these duties he loses sleep, does not feel hungry and his body is away from sense pleasures. His enthusiasm for doing his duties increases. Because of the intrinsic liking for the Self he treats even his life as insignificant. Will he, who is in love with his soul, feel sorry if his body has to labour? As the desire for sense-pleasures vanish and physical tendencies vane his joy in performing duties doubles. Even if performance of his duties is interrupted he does not feel sorry for it neither does he feel he has won a victory if he has finished his duty successfully. He in whom such qualities are found should really be called a *Sattvic* doer. (18:632-648).

Rajas doer Now the sign by which a *Rajas* doer may be recognised is that he is full of worldly desires. (18:649). He is the meeting place for all the desires and failings in the world. He starts with acts which give fruits easily and he will not even leave a paisa from whatever profits he can get from it and for this he will sacrifice even is life. He is ready to swallow other

people's property while guarding his own. (18:651-654). He uses all his faculties to give trouble to others and without bothering about their welfare he works for his own gains. He does not let thoughts of distaste arise in his mind for any type of work even if he has no ability to complete it. He is poor in keeping sanctity. If he succeeds in any task he mocks at the world in the surge of happiness and if he is unsuccessful then stricken with grief he denounces it. A person who does actions thus is a *Rajas* doer. (18:655-661).

Tamas doer After this I shall now tell about the *Tamas* doer who is like a repository of evil deeds. (18:662). Just as strong poison does not know its own power of destruction, he is inclined to do evil deeds which can destroy others and while doing it he is not aware of what he is doing. There is no relation between his acts and his intentions. This *Tamas* doer surpasses a madman. He lives by enjoying the pleasures of the organs. His behaviour is unrestrained and being controlled by nature he does not know what is proper or improper. He swells by the satisfaction of his own evil acts. And under the influence of pride he does not bow even before God. He is always deceitful about enjoying the sense pleasures. His behaviour is stealthy and his looks are like a prostitute taking away other man's possessions. In other words his whole body is made up of falsehoods and his life is like a gambler's den. His life should be considered as home of a selfish robber. Therefore nobody should get involved in him. He gets enraged when he sees good deeds of others. (18:664-675). The good deeds of others turn into bad deeds by his involvement. He considers good qualities of others as bad qualities and he turns nectar into poison. When some good deed that can make the worldly life bear

good fruits and give a better position in the after-world comes to his lot it is most certain that he would be sleeping at that time. But when it comes to doing evil deeds the sleep goes away immediately. (18:677-681). When it is the time to do beneficial deeds he feels lethargic, and contrarily when evil deeds are to be done the lethargy is under his control. He burns with jealousy when he sees the advancement of others. He remains jealous throughout his life. And he starts labours of fulfilment of desires which will last him for aeons. He does worry about matters beyond this world but is not able to gain even a blade of grass. Such a person who is definitely a pile of sin may be considered as a *Tamas* doer. Thus I have explained to you three kinds of acts, doer and knowledge. (18:683-689).

THREE TYPES OF INTELLECT

Now the intellect which, covered by delusion and embellished by doubt moves in the realm of improper knowledge and is the mirror through which an individual sees himself is also of three types. Arjuna, is there anything in this world which has not been turned into three types by the three attributes? What is there in this visible world which is not of three types? Therefore the intellect has also become of three types due to the three attributes. Fortitude is also similarly divided. Out of these two I shall explain to you about the three divisions of intellect first. (18:690-695).

Superior, medium and inferior ways There are three types of ways, superior, medium and inferior, for every creature in this world to follow. These three ways are respectively known as not doing prescribed acts, doing

fruit motivated acts, and doing forbidden acts. Because of these the creature develops fear for this world.

Superior way Therefore, doing the prescribed routine acts according to one's right, is the superior way. The same should be practised keeping in view the attainment of Self-realisation. Thus practised, the doing of the prescribed routine acts frees one from the fear of this world and facilitates liberation. A wise person who acts in this manner becomes free from the fear of this world and by this behaviour set himself on the path of liberation. The intellect that decides on the behaviour of the individual by keeping trust in the prescribed routine deeds, guarantees liberation. Therefore why one should not base one's renunciation on the foundation of the inclination to act and engage oneself in actions? (18:696-704).

Sattvic intellect Doing the prescribed routine deeds definitely leads to liberation. *Sattvic* intellect is that which has the inclination towards doing the prescribed routine deeds. It knows which deeds are not proper. It does not turn towards fruit-motivated deeds that create fear of the world and towards forbidden deeds which should not be done and entangle one in birth-death cycles (18:707-710). The *Sattvic* intellect is definitely afraid when it notices a forbidden action, the action that binds one to birth and death cycles and fearing it keeps away from it. The intellect that understands which deed is good and which is evil after carefully considering actions and non-actions and measuring them with the scale of inclination to work and renunciation, is the *Sattvic* intellect. (18:713-717).

Rajas intellect The intellect that does deeds without understanding which is a good deed conforming with the code of *Dharma* and which is an evil deed against *Dharma* (18:720), missing the latter only by good luck, the intellect that considers both kinds of deeds as alike, the intellect that does not know how to choose between proper and improper deeds, is *Rajas* intellect. (18:722-723).

Tamas intellect The intellect that considers all religious deeds as sinful and real things as false, interprets the meaning of the Shastras in reverse manner and considers good qualities as bad, and which considers matters agreeable to the Shrutis (Vedas) as perverse, should be called *Tamas* intellect. How can such intellect, which is like a dark night, be proper for religious deeds? (18:726-729).

THREE TYPES OF FORTITUDE

Thus I have explained to you the three divisions of intellect. Now, when the intellect decides do perform a deed, then the fortitude supports it and is also of three types. I shall tell you about the three types of fortitude also. (18:730-732).

Sattvic fortitude When the *Sattvic* fortitude is created, the activities of the mind, the life-force and the organs stop. Then the association of the ten organs with the sense-objects breaks and they enter the womb of the mind (i.e. instead of turning towards sense objects they turn inwards towards the mind). Since both the upper and the lower pathways of the life force are blocked it brings together its nine aspects and goes to the Sushumna Nadi. Since mind is freed of will and doubt it is exposed and the intellect rests quietly in its rear.

Thus, the peerless fortitude which by stopping the activities of the mind, life-force and the organs imprisons them to the confines of meditation and keeps them so without getting lured by them until they are handed over to our emperor the Supreme Soul, is the *Sattvic* fortitude. (18:737-744).

Rajas fortitude The individual who, by occupying the body gets engrossed in the worldly affairs and those of heaven by means of righteous living, earning and family life attains his ambitions on the strength of the *Rajas* fortitude. That fortitude with which he puts in efforts making certain that they would give four times as many gains is called *Rajas* fortitude. (18:745-748).

Tamas fortitude Now I shall tell you the characteristics of *Tamas* fortitude. This fortitude is made up of all mean qualities. Why should it be called a quality when it is inferior and mean? The word has been used in the case of *Tama* attribute without thinking. It shelters lethargy and just as unhappiness does not leave the support of sin similarly sleep never leaves him. Since he loves his body and wealth, fear does not leave him. Just as sin of an ungrateful person is not mitigated, similarly because of his friendship with everything and everybody, grief resides in him perpetually. Because he has tied himself to dissatisfaction, sorrow makes friendship with him. Discontent does not leave him until death. And because of the attraction for youth, wealth and lust grow within him arrogance also resides in him. He is always afflicted with fear, the enemy of the whole world. Just as Death does not forget the body similarly in a *Tamas* individual, arrogance is continual. The fortitude that

has clutched the five failings of sleep etc., should be considered as *Tamas* fortitude. (18:749-762).

Intellect decides about the three kinds of actions and the three kinds of fortitude take the actions to completion. Even if one can see the path clearly after sunrise, individual has to walk on the path by his own feet but for that walking also fortitude, i.e. the determination of mind is necessary. Thus I have told you about three types of fortitude and the three types of actions which are completed due to it. The fruit one gets from the action is called happiness. That is also of three types according to the nature of the action. I shall explain to you how this happiness in the form of fruit becomes of three types due to the three attributes. (18:763-768).

THREE TYPES OF HAPPINESS

When a little happiness is gained, then proceeding in the same manner it grows until the sorrow for the state of being in a body vanishes, that happiness is the bliss of the Self. That bliss of the Self also has become of three types. I shall tell you the characteristics of each of them. (18:776-777).

Sattvic bliss In order to achieve that bliss of the Self one has to suffer in the beginning itself the pains of observing the self-restraints, rules etc. When the strong detachment which swallows all the likes and dislikes develops it uproots the binding (liking) to the heaven and the world. The weakness of intellect etc. gets severely mutilated while listening to strict discretion and while observing strict austerities. Surge of the vital airs Prana and Apana are required to be swallowed through the Sushumna Nadi and all these efforts are required to be made in the beginning itself. (18:781-

784). The organs suffer and feel as if it is the end of the aeon while leaving the sense objects but with detachment these pains are to be faced with courage. Thus by suffering the pains in the beginning itself they achieve the highest kind of bliss. (18:787-788). After the detachment gets matured by the knowledge of the Self, all sorrows originating in ignorance including the detachment vanish. Intellect becomes one with the Soul and the mine of non-duality automatically opens up for it. In this way, the bliss, which is rooted in detachment and ends in the peace of the Self-realisation, may be called *Sattvic* bliss. (18:791-793).

Rajas happiness When the sense-objects and organs come in contact the *Rajas* bliss overflows. (18:794). This happiness that nurtures the individuals is like the company of a confidence trickster or the behaviour of a prostitute which appear to be pleasant in the beginning but are harmful in the end. It exhausts the stock of happiness fast, destroys life and drains the wealth of merit. All sense pleasures that were enjoyed earlier look like a dream and what only remains is to suffer sorrow. Thus in this life, this happiness results in calamities and in the after-life also it gives fruits like poison. Those who pamper their sense-organs by sacrificing the righteous ways of living and of celebrating the pleasure orgies, strengthen the sins which lead them to hell. The worldly pleasures thus lead to ruin in the after-world. Worldly happiness which is sweet in the beginning but leads to a bitter end is *Rajas* happiness. Do not even let it touch you. (18:797-805).

Tamas happiness The pleasure that is obtained from drinking the undrinkable, eating the uneatable, or in the

company of a woman of loose morals, or by ruining others, snatching other people's wealth, or by listening to the praise by others, the pleasure that proliferates by lethargy or sleep and in the beginning and end of which one misses the road to progress because of delusion, may be considered as *Tamas* happiness. I am not going into its details because it is impossible. Thus I have clarified how, by the divisions of the action, the resulting happiness has also become of three types. (18:806-810).

No escape from attributes There is nothing in this world apart from the doer, deed and the fruit thereof. The three attributes are woven in this triad. Therefore keep in mind that there is no object on this earth or in heaven which is not bound by the attributes of nature. (18:811-813). No creature has escaped from the arrangement of the attributes in this world. Therefore all objects in this world are made up of these three attributes. It is these attributes which have turned one god into three (Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh). It is because of these three attributes that the three worlds (heaven, earth and nether) were created and the four castes and their duties have become different. (18:815-817).

DUTIES OF FOUR CASTES

The four castes At the top of the four caste system are the brahmins. The next two, kshatriyas and the vaishyas are of the same level as the brahmins because they are entitled to perform Vedic rites. The fourth caste i.e. the Shudras does not have the right to the Vedas therefore its sustenance is dependent upon the first three castes. Since it comes in close contact with

the three castes i.e. brahmin etc., it has been counted as a fourth caste. Because of their contacts with the twice-born, Shrutis included Shudras also in the caste system. (see notes) Thus the caste system divides people into four types. I shall tell you what the duties of the four castes are and the nature of the duties. By the attributes of these duties these four castes escape from the clutches of the birth and death cycle and attain God. These duties are assigned to the four castes according to the three attributes of nature. (18:818-825).

Attributes and castes In this system the *Sattva* attribute has entered equally in brahmins and kshatriyas. The *Raja* attribute mixed with the *Sattva* attribute has entered the vaishyas while the *Tama* attribute mixed with the *Raja* attribute has entered the shudras. Thus the mankind which is basically one has been divided into four types by the three attributes. Shastras clarify the duties which are separated due to the attributes. Now listen to which are the duties proper for each caste. (18:828-832).

The nine qualities of a brahmin Controlling the bodily tendencies and desires, the intellect meets the Self in solitude like a wife embracing her husband in private. This peaceful nature of the intellect is called "Shama" or serenity and all actions (fit for brahmins) start from it. That which restrains the external organs by showing them the fear of the scriptural rules and does not let them turn towards unrighteousness is called "Dama" or restraint and is a helpmate to "Shama". It is the second quality of the action. Ever thinking about God is called "Tapas" or austerity and is the third quality of the action. This action has two types of purity or "Shouchya", the internal purity of the mind

with pure emotions and the external purity of the body with good deeds. This is the fourth quality of this type of action. To tolerate all pains like the earth does is called “Kshamaa” or forbearance, which is the fifth quality and is sweet like the “Panchama” tone (equivalent to “G” scale of the western music). To behave in a straightforward manner with an individual who is against you is the sixth quality called "Aarjava" or uprightness. Understanding that behaving as prescribed in the scriptures leads to God-realisation is Knowledge and is the seventh quality of action. Steadfast unification of the intellect with the Supreme person by means of the power of knowledge of the Shastras or by meditation after the mind is purified is called "Wisdom" (Vidnyan) and is the eighth quality. And accepting what is prescribed by the Shastras is the same as belief in God (Astikya) is the ninth quality of action and the action, which has this quality, is the true action. Thus the action in which these nine qualities i.e. serenity etc., are faultlessly present is the natural duty of a brahmin. (18:845-851). This string of nine jewels of the nine qualities is an ornament of a brahmin and he is never without it. (18:854).

Seven qualities of a Kshatriya Now I shall tell you what is the proper action for a kshatriya. (18:855). Just as a lion does not seek anybody’s company while going hunting similarly he is strong and exhibits inborn bravery without external support. This bravery is the first and best of the qualities of a Kshatriya. (18:856-857). To astonish the world by one’s strength and qualities and not getting disturbed under any circumstances is the second notable quality exhibited by kshatriyas known as martial lustre. Courage or fortitude is his third quality by means of which his mind

and intellect do not experience fear even if heavens come down. (18:859-861). Overcoming the emotional effects (joy, sorrow, fear etc.) resulting from many calamities and guiding the intellect to pass through them and get favourable results is the fourth quality of a kshatriya called alertness. Extreme fighting spirit is his fifth quality. He faces the enemy and avoids retreat from the enemy. This fifth quality is superior among all the qualities just as devotion is among the four worldly obligations of a person. (18:863-867). Giving limitlessly in charity as per people's wishes and needs is the sixth quality of a kshatriya called generosity. (18:869-870). To protect and foster the subjects with love and to receive their services is the sense of Godly duty or "Ishwarbhava" (King is considered as representative of God). The storehouse of all power is this sense of being God's representative, which should be reflected in the behaviour of a Kshatriya and is the seventh quality which is the king among the qualities. A Kshatriya is adorned by these seven qualities. (18:871-873). The action which becomes sacrosanct by these seven qualities is the natural action of a Kshatriya. (18:878).

Duties of a Vaishya Now I shall tell you about actions, which are proper for a Vaishya. (18:879). To make a lot of profit from farm, seeds and ploughs, in short, to live by farming, maintaining cattle, or buying goods cheaply and selling them at higher price are the natural actions of a vaishya. (18:880-882).

Duty of a Shudra The three castes vaishya, kshatriya and brahmin are termed as dwija or twice born. To serve them is only the true prescribed duty of a shudra. There is no duty for shudras other than serving the

twice born. Thus I have told you about the actions proper for the four castes. (18:883-884).

Duties to be done as per caste entitlement Just as joining the river is proper for rainwater and joining the ocean proper for the river, similarly it is proper for a person to do whatever actions fall to his lot as per the rules of the four caste system. One should resolve firmly to do the natural actions as prescribed in the Shastras. One's duties and entitlement as per one's caste should be understood from the Shastras. (18:886-889, 891). A person who does actions in this manner, but laying stress on doing them gladly with body and mind without lethargy and without desire for fruits of the actions, does them exactly as prescribed by the Shastras and reaches the gates on this side of liberation (i.e. detachment), because he does not allow himself to be tainted either by not doing the prescribed deeds or by doing the prohibited ones. He is therefore not affected by the ills of the worldly affairs. He considers actions with desire like shackles of sandalwood and does not even look at them. And because he gives up the fruits of the other actions namely the routine actions and thus nullifies them, he reaches the boundary of liberation. In this way he avoids the traps of sin and merit in this world and stands at the gates of liberation in the form of detachment. (18:893-894, 896-900).

IMPORTANCE OF DETACHMENT

The detachment which is the limit of all fortunes and giver of Knowledge for attaining liberation and the endpoint of the labours of the path of action is the guarantee for liberation and is the fruit of the tree of merit. The bee that is the seeker sits on the flower of

detachment. That detachment is the dawn signifying that the sun of Self-realisation is about to rise. (18:901-903). Thus, by observing the rules of prescribed actions he becomes entitled to liberation. Arjuna, performing this prescribed action is my one and only call and is the highest kind of service to Me who is the Soul of everything. (18:905-906).

Prescribed duties puts burden on God The faithful wife exchanges pleasures with her husband in all sorts of ways and the very same is her tapas or a child has no means of life support except of its mother therefore its righteous action is to serve her. (18:907-908). One should not abandon one's prescribed duties. When the prescribed duties are performed it puts an obligation on God. It is His desire that everybody should do appropriate duties prescribed for him. Therefore when these duties are done one doubtlessly attains God. (18:910-911). Not to default on behaving as desired by Him is the highest service to Him. Doing anything other than this in purely business. Therefore when prescribed duty is performed it does not amount to action. It amounts to obeying the commands of God from whom the five principles came into existence. That God wraps up the rags of ignorance to make puppet dolls of individuals and makes them play with the strings made of ego with the strands of three attributes. God has pervaded the universe from inside as well as outside like the light from a lamp and when He is worshipped with the flowers of good deeds he is pleased. Therefore the Soul who is pleased with the worship gives him the prasad (grace) of detachment. In that state of detachment the attention is concentrated on God and he dislikes the entire world like a vomit and all the pleasures in the world also appear to him like

sorrows. Even before achieving the final success he achieves oneness with God by his total attention to Him and becomes worthy of Self-realisation. Therefore, he who observes austerities for achieving liberation should practice own *Dharma* with deep faith. (18:913-922).

FOLLOW OWN *DHARMA*

Arjuna, though own *Dharma* (*Swadharama*) is difficult to observe one should keep in mind the fruits one would gain from it. (18:923). If we start disliking our own Dharma because it is difficult then shall we not miss the bliss of liberation? (18:926). Even if our mother is a hunchback, her love on which we survive is not hunchback. (18:927). Even if ghee has better qualities than water can fish live in ghee? What is poison to the world is like nectar to the organisms living in it. Therefore, even though it is difficult to observe, everyone should do only what is prescribed for him and that which will liberate him from the worldly troubles. To adopt other people's behaviour because it appears good is like walking on your head instead of by your feet. Therefore Arjuna, is it not necessary to make a rule that one should practice one's own *Dharma* and avoid others? As long as there is no Self-realisation actions are going to be there and doing any action will always be difficult in the beginning. (18:929-935).

When every action has its difficulties then why should we blame our own *Dharma* for them. (18:936). If doing even those actions which we like involves labours then how can we say that actions prescribed by Shastras are difficult. (18:945). Is there any fruit other that sorrow when one accumulates sins by labouring one's organs and spending time of our life? Therefore

one should practice only one's own natural *Dharma* because it will mitigate your labours and fetch you liberation, the highest among the four obligations of man (*Dharma*, Artha, Kama and Moksha; see notes under Ch 12). (18:948-949). Then God, pleased by the great worship of observation of one's own *Dharma* destroys the *Tama* and *Raja* attributes from the mind and directs one's eagerness towards *Sattva* attribute resulting into the conviction that this earth and heaven are like poison. The person then achieves the detachment of the type implied by the word "Sansiddha" used earlier (in the Gita Shloka No 45) to explain the meaning of detachment. I shall now tell about how he becomes a seeker once this state of detachment is mastered and what he gains by it. (18:952-955).

BECOMING A SEEKER

Such a person is not caught in the web of worldly things like the body etc. His love for the world becomes dulled. He does not consider his sons, wealth and family as his even if they go by his wishes. Then his intellect scalded by the sense pleasures reverses into seclusion (become introspect). His conscience does not beak the vow of not turning towards external objects. Then that seeker grips his mind in the grip of oneness with God and turns its interested towards Soul. At that time his desire for the worldly and beyond the world subjects vanishes. Therefore if mind is controlled then desire also vanishes. Thus the illusions about the realness of the world vanish and he comes to the state of true knowledge (of the Self). His past karmas are nullified by going through the process of enjoying or suffering for them and new karma is not created,

because the ego of being the doer of the actions has already vanished. This state is called "Karma-samya-dasha" or the state of null karmas. When this state of null karmas is attained he meets his Guru automatically. (18:956-966). Once he meets his Guru, his actions and his responsibility as doer stops. (18:968). The ignorance of the seeker then is destroyed by the blessings of the true Guru. (18:970).

State of actionlessness Once the ignorance gets destroyed then the triad of actions, the doer and the act of doing vanishes and karma is abandoned automatically. Thus when the visible world is wiped away by destroying the ignorance which is the root cause of all actions then the seeker realises that what he was endeavouring to know is he himself. (18:971-973). When ignorance goes, it takes with it the knowledge also and what remains is the actionless consciousness. Therefore that state of pure knowledge is called non-doing (or actionlessness). He then remains in the state of his original form. The state of complete actionlessness is the Siddhi of actionlessness and is naturally the most superior among the Siddhis. (18:977-980). There is nothing more to be gained beyond the state of actionlessness. (18:983). This state is attained by the blessings of a true Guru. (18:984). Who can say that a person whose inclination has become steady in the Self by the destruction of duality after listening, due to his good fortune, to the advice of his true Guru has any action remaining to be done? Without doubt, such a person has nothing left to be done. (18:987-990). But it is not everybody that can reach that state. What a person, who has not yet been able to reach the state of Self-realisation, should do is explained in the following. (18:991).

Getting ready to meet his Guru That seeker should first burn the *Raja* and *Tama* attributes along with desire and prohibited actions in the fire of prescribed actions using the fuel of actions. (i.e. burn prohibited actions as well as the two attributes.) Also, he should see that the desire about children, wealth and heaven should be under his complete control. The organs which were exposed to various sense pleasures should be controlled (Pratyahar or control of organs). And acting as prescribed by the own *Dharma* and making the offering of the fruits to God, attain a steady state of detachment. Means should be obtained by which knowledge would grow and Self-realisation attained. If one meets his true Guru after being so prepared and he gives advice on Self Realisation without reservations, (18:991-997) then in time he will receive the fruits. (18:999).

When one achieves detachment and also meets True Guru and discrimination takes root in the mind, then the mind, using that discrimination, decides that Brahman alone is real and all other worldly things are an illusion. But the state of oneness with the all-pervading and the supreme Brahman where the path to liberation ends, in which the Knowledge by which the three states (of wakefulness, dream and sleep) dissolve itself dissolves, where the oneness of unification vanishes and not even a trace of bliss of the Self remains but which still remains as a remainder even when nothing remains, is achieved only step by step in due time. (18:1001-1006). The lamp of thoughts is lighted by the oil of detachment and he gets the treasure of the Self. The essence of the steps by which a seeker, who has become permanently worthy of enjoying this treasure of

the Self, achieves Self-realisation is the what I shall tell you now. (18:1008-1010).

CONTINUED IN Part 2

NOTES:

Twice born (Dwija) (18:818-825): *Dwija* means twicw born. Before the age of seven, members of the three castes Brahmin, Kshtriya and Vaishya undergo a ceremony called moujibandhan or thread ceremony after which they are formally entitled to study and to perform vedic rites. This is considered as being reborn as a person of that caste. Thus he is once born as a person in the world and second time he is born in the caste.

CHAPTER 18

RELEASE THROUGH RENUNCIATION

(PART 2)

STEPS TO SELF-REALISATION

That seeker reaches the banks of holy waters of discrimination by the path shown by the Guru and washes the dirt from his intellect. Then that intellect becomes pure and reaches its original state. And abandoning the conflict between happiness and sorrow it gets engrossed in contemplation of the Self. He

eliminates, by means of controlling the organs, the five pleasure subjects to which the organs had given importance brushing aside the life of Knowledge. Then he sets the now pure organs made introspective to the path of yoga on the strength of his courage. Similarly if he has to enjoy or suffer the fruits of the karmas of past lives he does not long for those fruits. In this way giving up liking for beneficial subjects and dislike for harmful subjects he lives alone in a cave or forested hills where there is no disturbance from people and the only company he has there are his own organs. His pastime is to control the mind and the organs, his speech is silence. He does not know how much time passes in the contemplation of the mantra given by his Guru. And while eating he does not bother about three things namely to become strong, to satisfy is hunger or to satisfy his taste buds. The satisfaction he gets by eating little has no measure. The body will die if hunger is not satisfied therefore he eats just enough to sustain life and that too in quantities that will not make him sleepy or lethargic. His body touches the ground only when he prostrates before the deity for worship otherwise he does not lie on ground thoughtlessly. He moves his limbs only for survival of the body for getting food. In this way he keeps his mind and organs under control. (18:1011-1029).

He does not permit his tendencies to reach the threshold of mind. Then where is the question of expressing them in words? Conquerring the body, speech, mind and external organs, he masters meditation. He constantly guards the steady interest in the Self-realisation awakened in him by the Mantra given by his true Guru. The customary way of meditation is to meditate in such a way that the meditation and the

subject on which he meditates become one. For this one has to meditate until meditation, meditator and the subject of meditation become one. Therefore the seeker with his attention on attaining Self-realisation resorts to the practice of yoga. By pressing the joint midway between the anus and the genitals and thus contracting the anus, he practices the three postures namely, the *Mula Bandha* posture (the knot at the root or base), the *Jalandhar Bandha* and the *Odhiyana Bandha* (knots, see 6:192-200) and unites the pranas thus awakening his Kundalini. Clearing the path of the *Sushumna* nerve, he brakes through all the *Chakras* from *Muladhar* to *Adnya* and then releasing the shower of nectar from the *Sahasrar* (the thousand petalled lotus at the top of the head), he brings the stream of the nectar down to the *Muladhar Chakra*. Then he makes an offering of his mind and the pranas to the consciousness active in the *Adnya chakra*. While this power of *Kundalini* is being activated he continues his practice of meditation in the background. In order that the practice of yoga and meditation should continue uninterrupted, he has already attained detachment, which accompanies him right from the beginning, until he attains the final unification with the Self. (18:1030-1043). If detachment is present in a seeker of liberation until his tendencies dissolve in the Self then how can impediments come in his spiritual path? Therefore that fortunate person becomes worthy of Knowledge of the Self by practising yoga with detachment. Protected by the armour of detachment he rides the horse of *Rajayoga*, and holding the sword of meditation fast in the grip of discrimination, he cuts through all difficulties big and small and marches in the dark battlefield of the world and wins the liberation. (18:1045-1049).

Enemies to be conquered

First enemy- ***Body ego*** Now, the first among the enemies in the form of failings who have come to stop him in this battle and whom he has beaten is the ego of the body (I-am-the-body feeling). This ego of the body does not leave you after death nor does it allow you to live properly after you take birth, he traps you and keeps you languished in the stockade of the skeleton. But that brave seeker captures the fort of the body that is the shelter to this ego.

Second enemy- ***Strength*** And strength is the second enemy he subdues. This enemy, i.e. strength, quadruples itself at the mention of sense-pleasures and the entire world is threatened by it leading it to the state of death. It is thus a basin of the poisons of the sense-pleasures and king of all failings. But how can it tolerate the blow of the sword of meditation? (18:1050-1054).

Third enemy- ***Arrogant pride*** And the third traitorous enemy which he kills is the arrogant pride, that makes a person feel happy when he gets the things he likes and shout in that fit of joy. It makes the seeker go astray from the good ways and pushes him towards non-righteous ways leaving him in the clutches of hell. And anger, the biggest of the failings that even the greatest of the *tapaswi*s (observers of tapas) dread arises from it.

Fourth enemy- ***Lust*** And the next failing is lust which grows more demanding the more you satisfy it. If you destroy it then anger also gets destroyed.

Fifth enemy- ***Parigraha*** Just as the king makes the shackles to be carried by the person for whose feet they

are meant, similarly, *Parigraha* or tendency to possess is the enemy which grows with possessions. It influences the seeker and introduces bad qualities in him and makes him dependent on family attachment. By means of activities like acquiring disciples, collecting books, building religious centres, exhibiting yogic prowess like Khechari Mudra etc, it has enticed even hermits into company of people. Even if he leaves home and goes to the forest then Parigraha manifests itself in the form of forest creatures and articles and pursues him even if he is naked. The seeker destroys the unconquerable Parigraha and enjoys the pleasure of having conquered the world. (18:1055-1066).

Therefore the group of the qualities like pridelessness etc. (See 13:201) come before him under his command. Then the three states of wakefulness, dream and sleep hail him as he traverses the path of actions. The discrimination using knowledge of the self drives away the visible world and the state of yoga welcomes him. He is showered by *Riddhi* and *Siddhi*, the occult powers. And as the kingdom of unity with Brahman approached near he finds the three worlds full of bliss. At this stage everything becomes equal and no duality is left which might have made him say that this is my friend and that is my enemy. In fact there is nothing left in the world which he can say belongs to him because he has become one with the Brahman. Since he has embraced the entire universe narrow feelings like attachments are cast away. (18:1067-1075).

Worthiness to become Brahman Thus when the enemies are conquered and the realisation that the entire universe is unreal has been gained, the *Rajayoga* practice becomes automatically steady and he loosens

the strong armour of detachment for some time. There is nothing left to be destroyed by meditation therefore he restrains his actions. (18:1076-1078). When attainment of Brahman approaches his practice also stops. (18:1080). As soon as it is apparent that Self-realisation would soon be experienced he does away with the means of spiritual practice therefore his means progressively become less and less. Then when the detachment has reached perfection, the study of Knowledge matured and the fruits of yoga practice are seen in the form of peace which pervades throughout his person, then the seeker is worthy of becoming the Brahman himself. (18:1083-1086). The unsteady nature of the river is seen only where it enters the sea, the water which has become part of the sea remains calm. The relation is similar between the Siddha who becomes Brahman and the Brahman itself and because of the peace character of peace he soon becomes Brahman. But when instead of becoming Brahman a seeker experiences It then it is called worthiness to become Brahman. (18:1088-1090).

That person who has reached the state of worthiness of becoming Brahman gains cheerfulness of mind. (18:1091). The labours made for attaining Self-realisation are mitigated. This is the state, that is gained by Self-realisation, which is well known by the term Atma-bodha-prashasti or serene cheerfulness. Because of being full of equanimity he neither grieves because something is lost nor desires anything particular. (18:1094-1096). After he experiences Self-realisation differences disappear wherever he looks. Because of this, whatever improper knowledge is gained during the states of wakefulness and dream dissolves in ignorance. When Self-realisation increases that

ignorance also continues to decrease and dissolves into that Knowledge. (18:1098-1101).

Fourth kind of Devotion When the knower merges with Me as the knowable becomes less and less then all ignorance vanishes. (18:1106). He gains the fourth kind of devotion to Me wherein he cannot see anything other than Me. Because there are other categories of devotion (Ch. 7) like *Arta* (distressed), *Jijnasu* (curious), *Artharthi* (desirous of wealth), this devotion is called the fourth type. Actually if you think about it, there is really nothing like devotion of the first type or the fourth type, that devotion is the name given to my natural state. (18:1111-1113). It is the same devotion which manifests itself as deep desire in a *Arta* (distressed) devotee and the subject of the desire also is Me. In *Jijnasu* (curious) devotee the same devotion becomes the desire for knowledge. The same devotion becomes the desire for wealth and the wealth which means everything, also becomes Me. (18:1119-1121). Thus this devotion to Me, because of ignorance, considers Me the seer as an object to be seen. It is devotion to Me that is practised everywhere but the visible form imagined for Me is due to ignorance. After the ignorance is removed I again am understood as a seer. (18:1124-1125). Like the perfect moon on the full moon night, I am seen through the path of Knowledge also but in a different way. When I am thus seen, it is only I who gains Me and the seer also vanishes as a seer. Therefore Arjuna, this fourth type of devotion to Me is beyond the visible paths. (18:1127-1129).

You have already heard that the devotee who becomes one with Me with this knowledge based devotion,

becomes nothing other than Me because in the seventh chapter I have sworn to you that a person of Knowledge is my soul. That this very same type of devotion is the best is what I advised Brahmadeo through Bhagwat (*See notes*) in the beginning of the aeon. Persons of knowledge call it "*Swasanviti*" (Knowledge) and the Shaivaites call it Shakti. We call it "Extreme devotion". A Karmayogi attains it at the time of becoming one with Me. Then he realises that it is I who has pervaded the whole universe. In this condition, detachment with discrimination, binding with liberation and activism with renunciation totally disappear. Just as the sky principle remains even after swallowing the other four principles, in the same way he remains aloof and attains unity with my pure and immaculate form, which is beyond the means and the goal and enjoys the bliss of the Brahman. This experiencing of the bliss of the Brahman is like the distinct shining of Ganga even after it joins the ocean. A mirror kept before another mirror sees its own reflection, that is the manner in which he experiences the bliss of the Brahman. Even after the mirror is removed and the reflected image vanishes, the looker enjoys the bliss of the form of the self in himself. When one is awake the dream vanishes and the realisation that he is alone comes and even when nobody else is there one enjoys the aloneness, it is similar in this case. (18:1130-1141).

BEING ONE WITH ME

Somebody may say on this that there cannot be enjoyment after oneness. (18:1142). But how can he who has not been one with Me know who I am? Then how can it be said that he is devoted to Me? Therefore

that Karmayogi becomes one with Me and enjoys my form even without doing actions. (18:1145-1147, 1149). In non-duality there may not be any action but there is definitely devotion and that can be understood only from experience. It cannot be expressed in words. (18:1151). When such a person, by previous influences utters anything or calls Me then I respond to his call and it is as if I who made those utterances. When one who speaks to himself there cannot be any speaking and under these conditions silence constitutes my best praise. Therefore when he speaks since it is only I that is speaking, what is produced is silence and that silence is My praise. (18:1152-1154). In the same way whatever he sees through his eyes or intellect that seeing pushes aside the object to be seen and shows the form of the seer himself instead. (18:1155). Thus when the visible object disappears and is experienced as the seer himself then in that oneness even the consciousness of his being the seer does not remain. (18:1157).

Thus when the seer becomes one with my form and sees anything then the object he sees and the seer both vanish along with the action of seeing. (18:1161). Once the seer becomes one with my form the visibility of the visible object does not remain. This state in which the object is seen as well as not seen is my real vision. He experiences this vision with any object and he attains the sight that is beyond the visible object and the seer. And because he has entered the form of the Self he is never unstable. (18:1163-1165). Because he has completely attained my form he becomes quiet (18:1166), and his coming and going stops and that itself becomes pilgrimage to the non-duality that is Me. (18:1168). He had gone away from Me because of his

I-am-the-body feeling and he has returned to Me therefore this going and coming is his pilgrimage and he becomes my pilgrim. (18:1172). If due to the disposition of his body he started doing some actions then it is only I who meets them on the pretext of the action. Arjuna, in this state the difference between the deed and the doer vanishes and seeing Me through the Self he himself becomes Me. (18:1173-1174). How can any action done after becoming one with Me become an action? If while doing action one does not maintain the ego of being the doer then all his actions become non-actions and that is the sign of my worship. Therefore Arjuna even if he has done any action in prescribed way then it does not imply he has done any action, instead it becomes my superior worship. (18:1176-1179).

In this way whatever he speaks becomes my praise, whatever he sees becomes my vision and his walk becomes pilgrimage to non-duality that is Me. Arjuna, whatever he does becomes my worship. Whatever he thinks becomes my *Japa*, and the state he is in becomes my *samadhi*. He becomes one with Me through the yoga of devotion. (18:1180-1182). With his exceptional devotion he sees Me as the seer in everything that can be seen. He dances wildly with the knowledge that the visible universe apparent in the form of the field and the knower of the field in the three states of wakefulness, dream and sleep is all Me who is the seer. (18:1185-1187). He knows that when he awakens then all emotions he saw in the dream were not different from himself. Similarly he experiences that what appears to be existing and not existing is all himself the knower. He knows that I am the birthless, ageless, inexhaustible, indestructible, without past and limitless bliss. He also knows that I am also

immovable, not liable to fall down, infinite, incomparable, root of everything, formless as well as with form, bender of the ruling powers as well as the ruler, without beginning, indestructible, fearless, support of as well as the supported objects. He also knows that I am the master of everything, and am ever, natural, unceasing, everything and in everything and beyond all. That which is most recent and also oldest, with form of nil and complete, biggest and tiniest, is all Me. That which is actionless, companionless and without sorrow is also Me. All things are in Me and I am in all things. Thus I am the Superior Person. I am without words, without ears, form or lineage. I am the uniform and independent and the ultimate Brahman. Thus by becoming one with Me he knows Me through his incomparable devotion and also realises that this knowledge is also Me. (18:1191-1200).

After the knowable has dissolved and only the knower remains, one who knows this is also the knower himself. Arjuna, he also realises that the power of knowledge which knows this non-duality is also Me. (18:1203-1204). When he knows that the one and the only Soul beyond the duality and non-duality is undoubtedly only Me and actually experiences it (18:1205), then with the awareness of "I am he" having dissolved in the bliss of the Self he enters My form. Therefore the reference to "he" becomes irrelevant and consequently reference to "I" also becomes baseless and he merges into My form. (18:1209-1210). Just as when one is subtracted from one, the remainder is zero, similarly when being and non-being are subtracted from each other what remains is Me. In that state it is meaningless to talk about the terms Brahman, Soul and God and it is also meaningless to say that nothing

exists. (18:1212-1213). Just as not speaking is as good as speaking mouthful, realisation comes without the awareness of knowledge and ignorance. In that state realisation realises realisation, bliss enjoys bliss, happiness becomes happy, gain begets gain, brightness becomes bright and surprise dissolves in surprise; control of mind becomes silent, repose relaxes, and experience gets obsessed with experience. In short, he gains the pure fruits of becoming Me through the practice of Karmayoga or the yoga of action. (18:1214-1218).

I am the crown of that emperor i.e. Karmayoga and in exchange for it he becomes the jewel of Knowledge. Or he becomes the expanse of sky above the pinnacle of liberation, of the temple of Karmayoga. In these woods of the world, Karmayoga is the proper road which takes one to the town of unity with Me. Or with the waters of knowledge with devotion, the seeker reaches the ocean of bliss of the Self which is Me, by the current of Karmayoga. Arjuna, I am telling this to you again and again because of the greatness of Karmayoga. Arjuna, I am not attainable by means of choosing a place, time or substance because I am naturally present in all, therefore no difficulties are faced in attaining Me. I can be attained easily by following the Karmayoga. (18:1219-1225).

THE GITA SUPERIOR TO SHASTRAS

The Guru-disciple system has been established for learning how to attain Me. (18: 1226). Though I am always available, just as wealth present in the earth requires efforts to extract it, I can be attained only by certain means. (18:1228). One may ask why Shri

Krishna is talking about means after talking about the fruits so far. The excellence of the Gita lies in the fact that liberation is achieved by all the means suggested in it. The methods told in other Shastras are not necessarily all proved ones. (18:1229-1230). Shastras remove the grime of ignorance but beyond this they are not qualified to give knowledge of the Self. The place the Shastras have to go for proving their authenticity is the Gita. Gita guides the Shastras on proper path. (18:1233-1235).

Shri Krishna has discussed in detail various methods for Self-realisation in the earlier chapters of the Gita. But thinking that perhaps Arjuna might not have understood the subject by hearing once, Shri Krishna is telling the same thing again as a summary. And now the Gita is nearing its conclusion therefore he has tried to bring uniformity of objective between the beginning and the end, the reason being that various principles have been discussed in the middle parts to explain the various topics raised during the discussion. Therefore somebody might say without considering the context of the earlier and later parts of the Gita that these principles are the main principles giving the essence of the Gita. Therefore we are ending the Gita by proving that the various principles are included in the consideration of the main principle. (18:1236-1242).

THE ESSENCE OF THE GITA

Destroying ignorance is the main topic of this Gita, attaining liberation is its fruit, and the means for these two is the Knowledge. This Knowledge has been discussed in detail in various ways in this book. Shri Krishna is telling the same thing again in a concise

form. Therefore Shri Krishna has set upon to discuss the means for achieving the goal even if the goal has been achieved. (18:1243-1245).

Shri Krishna said, “That Karmayogi, by becoming one with Me with such dedication, remains so eternally. By worshipping Me with flowers of prescribed duties he gets the faith in knowledge of the Self by my favour. Once this faith in is achieved then the devotion to Me grows and he becomes happy by becoming one with Me due to that devotion. He observes Me the Soul, illuminator of the whole world as pervading everything (18:1246-1249). While he follows Me and takes shelter under Me with intellect, words and body, he may sometimes do improper deeds but just as when the stream of dirty street water and the big river are same once they meet the Ganges, once my knowledge is attained good and evil become same. (18:1251-1252). The differences like good and evil appear only until one gets my all pervading illumination. (18:1255). Therefore as soon as he meets Me his karma in nullified and he occupies the seat of unification with Brahman. He achieves my eternal position, which is not affected by location, time or nature. All in all Arjuna, what gains will he who has gained my pleasure miss? Therefore Arjuna, surrender all actions in Me. (18:1257-1260).

Without abandoning the routine duties keep your attention in discrimination. With the strength of that discrimination you will see my blemishless form which is different from action. You will observe that Maya in which all actions are rooted is far from you. You will find that just as there is no shadow without form similarly Maya also is not separate from the Soul.

Once Maya is negated then total renunciation of all the actions (karmas) will occur without efforts. Once all karmas vanish only soul remains. Now you dedicate your intellect to it. This way your intellect will remain singularly united in Me. At that time your mind will abandon all other issues and be devoted to Me. Act rapidly in this way to see that by abandoning all subjects of contemplation the mind will be concentrated in Me. (18:1261-1268).

When your mind will become one with Me with this exceptional devotion you will receive my complete favour. Then the sorrows of birth and death which all creatures have to suffer become pleasurable however hard they may be. (18:1269-1270). How can he whose I-am-the-body attitude has been completely destroyed by my favour be afraid of the worldly matters? Therefore Arjuna, you will be saved from the downfall from the worldly matters. But if you ignore my advice due to your ego then even your being ever liberated and indestructible will be futile and you will have to suffer the injuries due to the awareness of the body. In this realm of the body awareness there is not a moment's respite in suffering death at every step. If you do not listen to my advice then you will have to suffer terrible pains of death without even dying. (18:1272-1277).

By despising discrimination if you foster the ego and because of that ego you called, using your own intellect, your own body as Arjuna, bodies of others as relatives and battle as sinful action and become firmly determined that you will not fight, even then your inborn nature will make that determination infructuous. (18:1279-1285).

By your possessing the nature of a *kshatriya* you have in you the inborn qualities like bravery, martial lustre, alertness etc., therefore by virtue of these qualities of a *kshatriya* your nature will not let you keep quiet without fighting. Because you are bound by these qualities you cannot go against your nature. (18:1287-1291). A sick person does not like his illness nor does a poor person like his poverty but he has to suffer it due to his strong destiny. Due to the power of God the same destiny will not let you do otherwise. That God also resides in your heart. (18:1297-1298). That God has manifested himself by donning the ego of all beings. Through the veil of His Maya he singly moves the strings of 8.4 million shadows and makes them dance. He gives shape to everybody from Brahmadeo to a worm according to its worth. And the creature before whom He sets up the appropriate body occupies it with the feeling “I am this body”. (18:1302-1305). It accepts the form of the body which is separate from itself and sees itself in it. In this way by seating the creatures on the contraption of the body God moves the strings according to their karmas. The particular creature for whom an independent string is allocated according to its pre-birth karmas goes according to that string. (18:1307-1309). Affairs of all creatures are carried by the power of God. (18:1311). Thus the same God, through basic nature makes all creatures play and the Same is in your heart. Arjuna, the Self which generates in your mind when you do not have the feeling that “I am Arjuna" is only His true form. Therefore that God will incite you for battle through your nature and make you fight even if you do not desire so. God is the Master of all and controls Prakriti. Therefore one should use one’s organs to do actions appropriate to Prakriti pleasurably. Therefore

you leave the decision about whether you should fight or not to *Prakriti*. Keep in mind that Prakriti is under the control of the God in your heart. (18:1314-1318).

Offer body, speech, mind and ego to Him Merge into God by making an offering to Him of the body, speech, mind and ego just as the Ganga water merges into the ocean. Then you will attain complete peace by His grace and you will be engrossed in the Self with bliss of the Self. You will be the master of that indestructible state of the Self where creation is born, where repose takes rest and which the experience experiences. (18:1319-1322).

Gita the essence of Vedas This science well-known by the name Gita is the essence of the Vedic literature and one achieves priceless Self through it. Knowledge of the Self which is customarily known only as Knowledge and by praising which Vedanta became famous in the whole world, of which intellectual subjects are mere reflections and through which even I the unmanifestable seer of all can be seen is my secret treasure. But how can I hide it from you? Therefore Arjuna, because I feel the greatest sympathy for you I have given you this treasure. (18:1323-1327). I, the knower of all. having considered all aspects have told you the true knowledge. Now you ponder on it properly and do what you consider proper.
The Gita is the Knowledge by which ignorance about the real nature of the world is destroyed and only I am seen in everything, the knowledge explained through the use of examples and similes. I have advised on Knowledge of the Self in various ways. Shed by that Knowledge the ignorance that creates confusion about proper and improper codes of behaviour (*Dharma* and

Adharma respectively) which lead one to heaven and hell. (18:1388-1391). Just as when the dream goes away with the sleep and only the dreamer remains similarly nothing other than Me remains. Then with the idea that he is Me he becomes one with Me. Shedding the separateness from Me and realising the oneness with Me is what is called surrender. Once you surrender to Me you will become one with Me, therefore surrender to Me and be one with Me. (18:1396-1400).

How is it possible to surrender to Me as well as live as an individual at the same time? (18:1402). After you meet the God of the universe do not at all listen to the ominous talk that binding of the worldly life does not go. To serve Me by being one with Me is my natural devotion. Gain knowledge through it. (18:1403-1405). After you surrender to Me by the realisation of non-duality you will not be touched by the issues of prescribed and prohibited actions. (18:1407). Is there any reason for anything other than my all-encompassing form after becoming one with Me? Therefore do not worry about these things or about sin and merit. Understand that I shall become your sin and merit. Being separate from Me is the sign of binding to the karmas. That sin will be dissolved by knowledge about Me. Wise Arjuna, when you surrender to Me with undivided mind you will be one with Me and in this way automatically be free of all bindings. Accept Me and I shall free you by my light. Therefore there is no need for you to worry any more. Wise Arjuna, surrender to Me alone. (18:1411-1416).

So saying Shri Krishna embraced Arjuna by extending his right arm. (18:1418). It was just a pretext to impart

to Arjuna that which intellect does not understand and words cannot describe. Once the two hearts touched, the secrets from Shri Krishna's heart entered Arjuna's heart and by demolishing the non-duality he made Arjuna attain Self-realisation. (18:1420-1422).

Thus, Shi Krishna presented the holy Science of Gita which all are entitled to read and which is the basic theme of the Vedas. Now, if you ask how you (i.e. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj) know that the Gita contains the basic theme of the Vedas, then the explanation is as follows. The same truthful God through whose breath the Vedas were born, is telling this science of the Gita on oath through his own lips. Therefore it would be proper to say that the origin of Vedas is in the Gita. (18:1426-1429). Just as a tree is contained in a seed, similarly the three Vedas are contained in the Gita. Therefore I think that the Gita is the root of the Vedas and I can also see it clearly. (18:1431-1432). I shall now clearly indicate where the three parts of the Vedas namely action, worship and Knowledge have been imprinted in the Gita. (18:1434).

CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY

In the first chapter is mentioned how the science of The Gita originated. The second chapter elucidates the Sankhya philosophy, which stresses on Knowledge and which is independently capable of leading to liberation without any other help. (18:1435-1436).

In the third chapter the beginning of the discourse on the means for attaining liberation of persons who are in the grip of ignorance has been made. Those who are shackled by the I-am-the-body feeling should abandon actions with desire for fruits and also the prohibited

actions and should do the prescribed actions with care. Actions should thus be done with good intentions. These are what Shri Krishna has recommended in the third chapter. This should be considered as the Path of Action. (18:1437-1439).

If one thinks how the same routine and incidental action frees one from ignorance then the explanation given by Shri Krishna is that when bound persons reach the stage of a seeker, they should do all actions with the attitude of their being an offering to the Brahman. Whatever prescribed action occurs through body, speech or mind should be done with the intention of attainment of God. This expression of devotion to God through path of action has been discussed from the fourth chapter until the end of the eleventh chapter on the vision of the universal form. Thus in these eight chapters I have unveiled the section on worship. (18:1439-1445).

The true knowledge, the knowledge of love which is created through the benevolence of God and through the Guru-disciple system is described in the twelfth chapter from the Shloka “Adweshta” (Shloka No 13) or in the thirteenth chapter from the Shloka “Amanitva” (Shloka No 7). Therefore the twelfth chapter has been included in the section on knowledge. In the four chapters from the beginning of the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth, the topic of discussion is the matured fruit of Knowledge. Therefore the section on Knowledge has been covered by the four chapters up to the end of the fifteenth. Thus the Gita which elucidates the three sections is like a loveable Shruti. This Shruti which contains the three sections tells you loudly to gain the fruit of liberation. The class of ignorance which is always inimical to the means of knowledge has been

described in the sixteenth chapter. One should conquer this enemy with the help of Shastras is what has been told in the seventeenth chapter. In this way from the first chapter to the end of the seventeenth, Shri Krishna has discussed the Vedas created from his breath. The essence of all these chapters is contained in this pinnacle that is the eighteenth chapter. (18:1446-1455).

This dissertation named Bhagavdgita which has been perfected in 700 shlokas is the very form of the Vedas and is more generous than them. The Vedas are full of Knowledge but there is none more miserly because they speak only with the first three castes. Others like women, shudras etc., who suffer tortures from this world, are not allowed under their shelter. I feel that in order to remove these earlier mentioned faults and with the intention of giving benefit to all, the Vedas have reappeared in the form of the Gita. Not only that, the Vedas are available to anybody through the Gita when its meaning enters in the mind, by listening to it or by reciting it. (18:1456-1460).

BENEFITS OF THE GITA

He who always reads this Gita or remains in the company of one who reads it or distributes it to people by making copies of it gives food of the bliss of liberation to all. (18:1461-1462). If people come to listen to the Gita, then without bothering about whether they are good or bad he gives away the bliss of liberation and peace to the world. By being afraid of the earlier criticism the Vedas entered inside the Gita and attained dazzling fame. For this reason Shri Krishna personally told Arjuna the Gita which is the form of the Vedas and which enables one to savour

them. (18:1464-1466). Making Arjuna as a pretext Shri Krishna has unveiled the Gita and emancipated the world and reduced the burden of worldly matters from people. (18:1470).

Shri Krishna said, “Because of your many meritorious deeds you have become worthy of listening to the Shastra of the Gita which is the best among all the Shastras. Therefore, understand the traditional method of behaviour according to this Shastra and perform accordingly with proper rituals. (18:1480-1481). When a disciple gets knowledge through Guru’s pleasure, it becomes fruitful only if the customs of the (Guru’s) sect are observed. I shall now tell you the appropriate tradition regarding this Shastra. (18:1484-1485).

This Shastra of the Gita, which you have acquired with great earnestness, should never be told to a person devoid of austerity. And if he observes austerities but is unsteady in the devotion to his Guru then keep him away as Vedas have kept Shudras away from themselves. Or if a person observes austerities and is devoted to Guru and God but does not like to listen then too he does not deserve to listen to the Gita. (18:1486-1490). Now, if he observes austerities, possesses devotion as well as liking for listening but considers Me the author of the Gita and ruler of all people as an ordinary being or slanders Me or good persons then also he is unfit to listen to the Gita. (18:1497-1499). The austerity, devotion and intellect of a person who slanders Me or my devotees are deceitful therefore even if such a person is devoted, intelligent and austere do not let him come in touch with this Gita Shastra. (18:1504-1505).

Therefore Arjuna, install the idol of the Gita in the heart of the superior devotee who has laid a firm foundation of austerity and built the temple of devotion to Guru above it, and installed a pinnacle of the gems of non-slander over it and kept the main door of that temple, namely the desire for listening, open and you will be like Me and come to my level of worth. Because *Aum* the single letter *Pranava* sound was trapped inside the three monosyllabic letters *A, U* and *Ma*, that root of the Vedas has evolved further in the Gita. Or the Gayatri Mantra itself flowered and grew fruits in the form of shlokas from the Gita. He who explains the secret contained in the shlokas becomes one with Me after death. I love the devotee who explains the meaning of the Gita, with my heart even if he is separated from Me by his body. I like him more than person of learning, an observer of ritualistic actions and an austere person. There is none dearer to Me on this earth than he who tells the Gita to a group of devotees. He who reads the Gita making his mind steady with the love for Me becomes an ornament in a gathering of saints. (18:1507-1517).

And the sins of one who with pure mind keeps faith in listening to the Gita by abandoning slander in whichever possible way, run away instantly as soon as words of the Gita fall in his ears. (18:1529-1530). (***The philosophy part ends here***).

TRIBUTES TO GURU

I Have composed this book in the form of ovis which are beautiful to sing or interesting even if they are not sung. In the ovi metre are strung letters, which give a taste of the Brahman for the young and old. One goes

in trance just by listening to it then will it not cause an obsession if one listens to its discussion? Even a simple reading of this book makes the learning bloom and one forgets about nectar in the presence of its sweetness. The perfected verse gives such satisfaction that listening to it gives more satisfaction than contemplation and meditation. This listening will impart bliss of the Self to the listener and all organs will be satiated. Persons of spiritual authority understand the secret of the science of spirituality but others become happy even by skilful presentation of it. This is all the greatness of Shri Nivruttinath therefore this is not really my book but the result of his blessing. (18:1741-1750).

On some occasion, Shri Shankar told the spiritual knowledge in Parvati's ears. That knowledge was obtained by Matsyendranath who was hiding in the stomach of a fish in that sea of milk. When Matsyendranath met the limbless Chouranginath at Saptashringi, the latter regained his limbs. Then, in order that he himself should enjoy the bliss of the samadhi without interruption, Matsyendranath gave his state of the yoga to Gorakshanath and installed him in his own position, Gorakshanath being the only one in whom yoga could bloom and who could fight sense pleasures. (18:1751-1755). Then by tradition the bliss of non-duality which has descended from Shri Shankar was obtained from Gorakshanath by Gahininath. Seeing that people of the world are troubled Gahininath instructed Shri Nivruttinath to take up the tradition which has descended to him from Adi Shankar and save these people immediately from the influence of Kali (**Note:** Kali is the agent of strife and inspirer of strife in the present aeon known by its name Kaliyuga. Not to be

confused with Kaali the form of Goddess Durga). Shri Nivruttinath was already compassionate by nature and in addition his Guru had instructed him therefore he immediately set upon to bring peace to the world. (18:1756-1760). By feeling pity for the distressed he showered peace on them on the pretext of explaining the Gita. At that time I was before him anxiously waiting for his favour therefore he elevated Me to the position of fame. Thus he handed over the wealth of meditation to Me through this book. Otherwise I have not studied, nor I have read and I do not know how to serve my master then how can I achieve the worthiness for composing this book. But in reality Guru Maharaj has given shelter to the world by composing this book making Me the incidental pretext. (18:1761-1765).

This book which all you saints have caused to be completed through my hands so that it is useful to the three worlds, is incomparable. Only thing that now remains for me is the service to you.

PRAYERS FOR THE UNIVERSE

Now, may the Supreme God who is the soul of all the universe
be satisfied by this discourse and grant me grace.

May the wicked shed their sinister outlook and

May they develop liking for good deeds and

May all individuals develop friendship with each other.

May the universe lose its darkness of sin and

May the dawn of righteous duties come and

May the desires of all creatures be fulfilled.

May the assemblies of devotees of God who shower all that is auspicious on this earth meet all creatures.

These devotees are walking seeds of the wish-trees, living community of wish-stones or talking oceans of nectar.

May these saints who are like moon without spots or sun without the scorching heat, be the friends and relatives to all creatures.

Why ask for more?

May all creatures in the three worlds be perfect and happy and

May every creature carry desire for ceaseless devotion to the Primeval Supreme Being. And,

May those who live by the support of this book gain happiness in this world and the

next.

On hearing this the Lord of the universe said,

"I have given you this grace."

And by that boon Shri Dnyanadeo was very happy.

(18:1794-1802).

END OF DNYANESHWARI
(The Philosophical Part)

Offered at the feet of my Guru Shri Shankar Maharaj

ALAKH NIRANJAN

NOTES
Bhagwat (18:1130-1141): One of the *Puranas* describing and praising Lord Vishnu's actions. It

was written in early Christian Era more than five centuries after Sauti wrote Gita.

Matsyendranath (18:1751-1755):
Matsyendranath is considered as the founder of the Nath sect to which Saint Dnyaneshwar belonged. Legend is that once Lord Shiva (Shankar) was explaining secrets of the brahman to his consort parvati in an isolated location on bank of a river. In the river lived a fish who was carrying a human baby in her womb. Thus the baby heard the secret and when it was born, it had spiritual tendencies from birth. Lord Shiva realising what had happened gave the child formal advice and set him on spiritual path. Matsyendranath thus became the founder of the Nath sect. However Nath Sect people refer to Lord Shiva as Adinath or the original Nath. It is believed that Matsyendranath was an avatar of Vishnu. Later, Matsyendranath got involved in the Tantric sect which uses women, wine, meat etc as means for spiritual path. However, his disciple Gorakshanath freed him from Tantrism and established strict rules about dress, celibacy etc. for Nath yogis. Gorakshanath (Gorakhnath) was a great yogi, man of knowledge who travelled several times all over India and Nepal spreading the philosophy of the Naths. He wrote more than 40 books on yoga and philosophy in Sanskrit as well as vernacular. Among the Nath yogis nine yogis known as Navanath stand out prominantly in terms of their capability. Gahininath was one of these nine great yogis. Period of the nine naths is considered as 875AD to 11th century. He initiated Nivruttinath who in turn initiated his

youger brother Dnyaneshwar Maharaj in the Nath Sect (See biography). The Nath sect does not believe in caste or even religion as we know it today. Common people who adopted Nath sect were allowed to lead normal family life.